

A writing magazine

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Meet the **TIME TUNNELLERS**

AUTHORS ALLY SHERRICK,
BARBARA HENDERSON,
CATHERINE RANDALL, JEANNIE
WAUDBY, AND SUSAN
BROWN RIGG SHARE THEIR
FAVOURITE THINGS ABOUT
WRITING **HISTORICAL FICTION**

Issue 7 Spring 22

For the young, and the young at heart

PLUS

AUTHOR **EMMA READ** SHARES
HER TIPS ON HOW TO TELL
WHICH OF YOUR IDEAS HAS
THE MOST POTENTIAL

Author Interviews *with*

ANTHONY BURT
JEN CARNEY
JOAN HAIG & JOAN LENNON
GABRIELA HOUSTON
LEE NEWBERY
AND
MARK BALLABON

+ AN **EXCLUSIVE**
SNEAK PEEK INSIDE
MARK'S NEW NOVEL: *HOME*



Action Packed

Catherine Cawley

Judith Crow

Piu DasGupta

Emma Finlayson-Palmer

Alexandra Fowler

Brian U. Garrison

Rachel Keating

Jay Kennedy

Jayne Leadbetter

Sara Netherway

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Chrissy Sturt

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ILLUSTRATIONS
FROM

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PaperBound Magazine is a quarterly online magazine for the young, and the young at heart. It is dedicated to showcasing authors and illustrators of children's and young adult fiction. It strives to deliver inspiring content, new and exciting writing, book recommendations and top tips for aspiring young writers. PaperBound has been created by Emily, Lucy and Rayan who met while studying an MA in Writing for Young People at Bath Spa University.

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PG/ YA — some stories may include content that could be unsuitable for some younger readers, and that parents / guardians might want to check first. Please look out for these symbols in top corner.

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Letter from the editors

Spring 2022

Dear Readers,

It's finally spring! We hope you enjoy escaping into the pages of our action/adventure issue! We have another jam-packed edition for you full of new writing and illustrations, creative prompts, book recommendations, author interviews, and articles. Keep an eye out for the submission winner too.

We are also excited to share an exclusive sneak peek inside Mark Ballabon's *Home*—including some beautiful illustrations by Grant MacDonald.

Don't forget we are currently running our annual competition for young writers. The deadline is April 15th, and we'd love to read your stories! For more information take a look at page 34 or visit our website.

Thanks so much to all of our spring contributors, and to the publishers and publicists who help put us in touch with the awesome authors and books you see featured in this issue. We couldn't do any of it without all of your help.

If you'd like to be a part of a future issue, please get in touch. We're always on the look out for new writing and illustrations as well as interviews and book reviews. Check out our website for more details.

We hope you enjoy the spring issue!

Happy reading!

Emily, Lucy and Rayan

If you would like to contribute to a future issue, tell us what you thought of this one, or contact us about anything else, we'd love to hear from you.

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The front cover has been illustrated by the very talented, **Jay Kennedy**. Find out more about Jay on page 74

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This contents page
was illustrated by the
brilliant

**Alexandra
Fowler**

Find out more about
Alexandra on page 74

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want to read.



Armchair Adventures

by Piu DasGupta

Piu DasGupta

Piu DasGupta was born in Kolkata, West Bengal, India, grew up in India and the UK, and currently lives in Paris. She writes poetry and prose, and is currently editing two Middle Grade novels. Her children's poetry has appeared in many magazines including The Caterpillar, Northern Gravy, Tyger Tyger, The Dirigible Balloon, Children's Poetry Roundabout, and Paper Lanterns.



Follow Piu on Twitter: [@PiuDasGupta1](https://twitter.com/PiuDasGupta1)



today I travelled to a planet peopled with a sulky flower
dived into a chocolate river paved with fizz balls sweet & sour
pushed through wardrobe furs & met a talking fawn beneath a lamp
sweated with some other kids to dig holes in a prison camp
while a nasty man barked orders at us –
what a nightmare! – Far
worse than being almost crushed by a grinning toad in a motor-car
it was relief to reach Alm-Uncle's chalet buried deep in snow
to watch the fire crackle & outside to hear the fierce wind blow
I gobbled up the warmest porridge & finally chose the smallest bed –
what a day! But can you have a guess at all the books I read?

?

See if you can spot all seven
books in Piu's poem before
checking the answers below

Answers: The Little Prince/Charlie & the
Chocolate Factory/The Lion, the Witch, & the
Wardrobe/Holes/The Wind in the Willows/Heidi/
Goldilocks & the Three Bears



LEE NEWBERY

WE SPOKE TO LEE NEWBERY ABOUT THE INSPIRATION BEHIND HIS DEBUT NOVEL, *THE LAST FIREFOX*

*CAN YOU TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOUR DEBUT BOOK, **THE LAST FIREFOX**?*

Of course! *The Last Firefox* tells the story of Charlie Challinor, who's got a few big life problems. He's getting picked on at school, he's pretty much terrified of everything, and his dads are in talks of adopting another child. How on earth is he supposed to stand up for his little brother or sister if he can't stand up for himself? But then he accidentally becomes the guardian of the last firefox, and his whole world changes. Because the firefox is covered in magical fire fur that's governed by its mood, and now Charlie has to keep his furry little friend a secret from his bullies, his dads, and a sinister monster from another world that's hunting it down. Cue endless hilarity, adventure and danger as Charlie uncovers his own inner fire!

The book is being published by Puffin, and it's beautifully illustrated by the

amazingly talented Laura Catalán. I'm a very lucky debut author!

*WHERE DID THE INSPIRATION FOR **THE LAST FIREFOX** COME FROM? WHY DID YOU WANT TO WRITE IT, AND WHAT DO YOU HOPE READERS WILL TAKE FROM IT?*

The inspiration for *The Last Firefox* came from a few places, actually. I'm a huge Pokémon fan, and when I was younger I was always making up my own fantastical critters. One of them was a fox covered in fire instead of fur, which it could use to protect itself or show affection (a close relative of Vulpix, maybe?). But the true inspiration for the book came from my experiences of going through the adoption process. When my husband and I first embarked upon our journey towards becoming a family, I couldn't really see many books out there with adopted children as the main character, books where the character has two mums or two dads. I wanted our future child to see himself represented in the

world, so that was how this book was born.

We've now got a three-year-old son, and it warms my heart when he opens my book, points to an illustration of Charlie and his dads, and declares that it's him and his daddies (there may or might not be some similarities between Charlie's dads and myself and my husband!).

YOU MENTIONED YOUR MAIN CHARACTER, CHARLIE, HAS TO DEAL WITH AND OVERCOME A FEW ISSUES IN THE BOOK, SUCH AS BULLYING. WAS THERE ANYTHING THAT YOU FOUND DIFFICULT TO WRITE ABOUT AND, ALTERNATIVELY, WAS THERE ANYTHING THAT CAME MORE EASILY?

Actually, this was one of those rare instances where the first draft of the book wrote itself (alas, it hasn't happened since!). I think because it was so closely tied to my own experiences as an adopter, and as a shy child who, a bit like Charlie, was intimidated by everything, it just sort of leapt from my fingertips. I was writing from the heart every step of the way. Even the bullying scenes – difficult to read, perhaps, but easy for me to write because they were so engrained in Charlie's character arc.

THE LAST FIREFOX IS YOUR DEBUT NOVEL. COULD YOU TELL US A LITTLE BIT ABOUT YOUR JOURNEY TO PUBLICATION?

Ah, the journey to publication! I would

love to say that I wrote a book, found an agent straight away, went on sub, entered a 'hotly contested' auction with several publishers after a few days... but that did NOT happen. It sort of happened the long way for me. I've wanted to be a writer since I was eight, and in the second year of University I started taking it seriously. I wrote a YA book about a girl who could see dead people and subbed to agents, but that didn't get any offers. Then I wrote

I WAS WRITING FROM THE HEART EVERY STEP OF THE WAY.

another YA about magical teen runaways, which did get me an offer of representation from an agent – but only one, and that was after intense reworking and rewriting according to

her insight. We went on sub with that YA, and that didn't get any nibbles from any publishers. So, I wrote my first MG, *The Last Firefox*, and we went on sub with that.

An editor from Puffin said, 'Hmm, I like it, but not enough to buy it yet... come back to me if you don't get any offers.' And that's exactly what happened. No other publishers offered, so we went back to the editor at Puffin. We met in London (this was about two months before the UK went into lockdown for the first time), had a lovely dinner, and he offered me some editorial advice. I went home, spent a few weeks editing, then resubmitted. I waited some more, and then in May 2020, Puffin offered a two-book deal! It just goes to show that it only takes ONE person to love your

book. One agent, and then one editor!


WHAT WOULD BE YOUR BIGGEST TIP FOR ANYONE THINKING OF WRITING A BOOK FOR THE FIRST TIME?

I know this sounds cliché, but write whatever the heck YOU want to write. Writing is so much more fun when you're writing a book you yourself would love to read, not what you think other people want to read. It's pointless trying to write to a trend – if the trend is current, then you're already too late! Forget about all that and write the book of your heart.

WHAT KIND OF STORIES/BOOKS DID YOU LOVE TO READ GROWING UP?

I was a sucker for fantasies and horrors. I loved R.L. Stine and Darren Shan. But I was also a huge fan of *A Series of Unfortunate Events*, *The Spiderwick Chronicles*, and Joseph Delaney's *The Spook's Apprentice* books!

ARE YOU WRITING ANYTHING ELSE AT THE MOMENT?

I'm currently waiting back for edits on my second book with Puffin (which I can't talk about yet, but I think I can at least tell you that it's another standalone, not a Firefox sequel!), so I've been working on a just-for-fun YA. It's a bit over-the-top and outrageous and dark and funny. It might never see the light of day, but I've had SO much fun writing it so far! 

MEET LEE

My name is Lee Newbery, and I live in South Wales with my husband and our little boy. Our favourite thing to do is go on adventures together, which we blog about over on our family Instagram account, @theadventure_squad.

The Last Firefox is my debut novel, though there may or may not be a YA book of mine hidden far away in the depths of Wattpad, never to surface again.

The Last Firefox was published on March 3rd 2022, by Puffin.



LEE'S WRITING PROMPT

You're standing at a historical site (like a castle or a ruin of some sort), and unbeknownst to you, there's a portal to another world hidden somewhere inside. You pass by the portal and at the same time a fantastical creature leaps through it, on the run from a deadly predator on the other side.

What is the creature? What power does it have (try and think of the elements)? What does it look like (does it bear a similarity to an ordinary animal from our world)? It can be fun to put a magical twist on animals we know and love! What if your dog had an elastic tongue and could lick you from across the room?

We'd love to read what you come up with. Send your writing to paperboundmagazine@outlook.com, or better still, enter it into our competition for young writers!

ACTION/
ADVENTURE

PaperBound
Recommends

BOOKSHELF



ADVENTURE

SCIENCE

MG



MAGIC

MG



MG

SCI-FI



FAMILY

MG

ADVENTURE

Graphic Novel



LGBTQ+

YA

SCI-FI

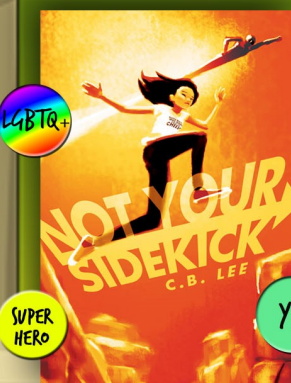


YA

LGBTQ+

MAGIC

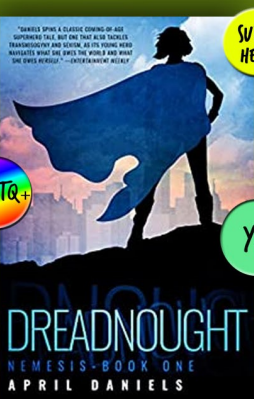
ACTION



LGBTQ+

SUPER HERO

YA



SUPER HERO

YA

LGBTQ+



YA

SUPERNATURAL

WESTERN

LGBTQ+

THE CROWS ARE WATCHING

by Emma Finlayson-Palmer



murder of crows cawed high above us. I shuddered as they passed, their calls harsh in the twilight sky.

'I thought we could have some fun while we're out here.' Willow took a bottle of vodka out of her rucksack and jiggled it.

My stomach churned; I didn't really want a drink.

Darkness pressed around us the deeper into the wood we went until we came to paths that were overgrown. Shadows moved between trees, making me jumpy like strangers were watching us from every side. Branches like bony fingers reached towards us.

'What's that?' I asked, pointing at a bundle of sticks and dark feathers tied together that vaguely resembled the shape of a man. Something about it made me uneasy.

'There's lots of those sort of things about. Some weird local superstition. Come on, we're nearly there.'

Trees thinned out and a one-story old shack type building stood in a clearing. Ivy crept across the broken bricks and slithered inside and out, strangling the building. Jagged shards of dirty glass like needle-sharp teeth in a screaming mouth was all that was left of windows.

Inside was damp and rusty. There was an old settee and a couple of stools next to a wonky table that had obviously been tidied up a bit.

‘Are you the only one that comes here?’ I asked, noticing more of the stick-men around the building.

‘Think so, just me and Kierton sometimes. Hardly anyone ever ventures this far into the woods.’ Willow brushed some leaves off the settee and dropped onto it.

Luna sniffed around, tail wagging while Willow turned on a couple of camping torches. She took a box of matches from her pocket and lit candles that were dotted about the decaying space. The candles flickered in the breeze, giving the place eerie shadows that looked like creatures crawling across the walls.

‘Have a drink and loosen up a little.’ Willow held out a bottle.

‘Thanks.’ I stared at the clear liquid long and hard before deciding to take a swig or Willow would go on again about how boring I was. It burned my throat and I tried not to choke. I handed it back and Willow knocked it back like she was drinking water.

Luna jumped up on the settee next to Willow and settled down. I pulled out a stool and perched on the edge.

My muscles relaxed a little as the vodka dulled my senses. Graffiti tags and things were scratched into the crumbling plaster. *The crows are watching!* was scrawled in red paint, like blood dripping down the wall.

‘Did you do that?’ I pointed to the words.

Willow twisted awkwardly to see where I was pointing. ‘Nah, that was there when we found this place.’

‘So other people do come here?’ I tried not to show the panic rising within me.

‘I’ve never seen anyone here before. Think that’s been on there for years, probably something to do with the Crowman,’ Willow said. ‘Some weird urban myth.’ Willow took another swig of the vodka.

‘Who is the Crowman?’

‘They say he had power to control the crows.’

‘Is that why all those creepy stick-men are all over the place?’

‘Yep.’ Willow sat up a little straighter now, a serious look in her eyes. ‘Things went bad with the Crowman and the village folk.’

I swallowed, my throat dry, and I reached for the bottle from Willow. ‘Bad how?’

‘One year when the harvest didn’t do well, they blamed the Crowman and refused to pay him what he was owed.’

I had a feeling this story was going to get darker. ‘Wait... did you hear something?’ I was sure a branch snapped.

We sat in silence listening to the whispering of the breeze rustling dry leaves and an owl somewhere in the distance.

‘Must have been a squirrel or something.’ Willow reached over for the vodka that I’d forgotten was still tightly gripped in my hand, my knuckles bone-white.

‘Go on, what happened next?’ I wasn’t sure I wanted to know.

‘He set the crows on the people of the village,’ Willow said excitedly.

‘What do you mean, *set* the crows on them?’

‘Pecking, scratching, that sort of thing. Whole murders of crows covering people. Gouging out their eyes. Popping like blueberries when you bite into them.’

‘Eww, Willow. I’ll never be able to eat blueberries again.’

She smirked. ‘They’re like juicy little eyeballs.’

‘What happened to the Crowman?’ I ignored her teasing.

‘Well, that’s the weird thing. For some reason the crows suddenly stopped attacking and the Crowman disappeared. Some say he was burned alive, then what was left of his body was buried in these very woods.’ Willow swept her arm around for dramatic effect.

I imagined the grisly remains dumped nearby. The thought made my skin prickle like needles jabbing me.

‘He stalks the woods looking for those that killed him so he can take his revenge.’

‘Stop it, Willow, this wood is creepy.’

Luna tensed, whined, then cocked her head to one side.

‘Hey, girl, what is it?’ Willow stroked Luna. She stared into the darkness beyond the



broken window.

'I don't like this,'
I whispered.

A skull
surrounded by feathers loomed out of
the dark in the window. 'BOO!'

I screamed. Luna bolted. The skull-like face was pulled away to reveal a boy. He had his hands up as if in surrender.

'Kierton! You jerk!' Willow got up and punched him on the arm as he wandered through the doorway.

I took deep breaths trying to calm myself, bile rising in my throat.

'Sorry, Wills. It was too good an opportunity not to.'

'You need to find Luna. You've scared her, you idiot!' Willow shoved Kierton and grabbed the lamp from the table and marched into the dark. I didn't want to get left behind. Taking one of the torches, I scurried behind them.

We stumbled through the trees calling for Luna. Our torches flickered over branches and created weird shapes, shadows twisted around us.

'Luna, here girl,' I called.

Twigs cracked underfoot as I tried to keep pace with Willow and Kierton. My foot

slipped and I fell heavily. A shooting pain burned inside my ankle. My torch bounced out of my hand and plunged me into darkness. For a moment, I lay there winded and unable to see. Crawling, my fingernails dug into damp earth and decomposing leaves.

Willow and Kierton's voices grew quiet. Panic tightened my chest. They hadn't realised I was left behind.

A branch cracked.

Willow? I wanted to say but I couldn't get the words out.

A rasping breath was nearby.

Another twig snapped. Closer.

Something soft and cold brushed against my cheek. I froze in silent fear. Heart racing, my mind flicked through a horror show of images. My eyes popping like blueberries. I scrunched them shut tight.

The words *the crows are watching* swirled like a mantra in my head.

I stayed as still as I could, barely daring to breathe.

Feathers fluttered against my skin. I squeezed my fists so tight my nails punctured my palms.

Fetid breath, like rotting flesh filled my nostrils. I wanted to scream. To empty my stomach and flee, but I couldn't move.

Talon-like points clawed across the exposed skin. Stinging and hot, copper scented as my blood met the night air.

'Liv?' Willow's voice cut through the darkness.

My insides lurched and I could move again. I twisted sideways as the vodka emptied my stomach.

Wiping my mouth on my sleeve, I scrambled unsteadily to my feet, ankle still sore. I lashed out, flailing my arms in all directions but nothing was there. I slipped my phone from my pocket and the screen lit up the space with an eerie glow. Nothing there.

Get a grip, Olivia, it's the drink and the dark.



I spotted the lamp lying on the uneven floor just ahead creating a weird green glow in the leaves and I snatched it up. ‘Willow?’

Willow emerged from the dark. ‘Liv, thank God.’

‘I fell,’ I muttered, weakly.

There was growling in the distance. Willow held my arm and we headed towards the noise.

Luna was at the edge of the wood. She whined when she saw me and licked at my hand. My skin stung under her rough tongue.


‘Jeez, Liv, you got scratched up pretty bad.’

‘It was... the crows,’ I whispered.

‘Those stories really got to you, didn’t they? It’s from branches and brambles when you fell, that’s all,’ Willow said, pulling a black feather from my hair. ‘Come on, let’s go home and get you cleaned up.’

We walked under street lights back towards the house. It felt safer putting some distance between me and the trees.

The crows are watching, the breeze whispered, and crows cawed from the trees as if answering.

I looked back the way we’d come. A dark figure watched from the edge of the wood. 



EMMA FINLAYSON-PALMER

Emma is a working class, autistic writer who lives in the West Midlands with her husband and a multitude of children, cats and chickens. She is a writer of children’s fiction, represented by Veronique Baxter of the David Higham agency. Her debut chapter book, *Autumn Moonbeam: Dance Magic*, will be released by UCLan in July 2022. Emma runs #ukteenchat, a writing themed chat on Twitter, and edits, mentors and reads competition entries for #WriteMentor and reads flash fiction entries for Retreat West. She’s also one half of Word Witches, as a children’s fiction editor.

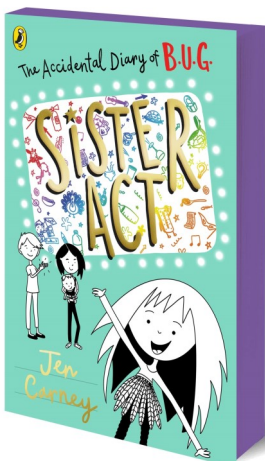


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TikTok: @EmFinlaysonPalmer

JEN CARNEY



Middle grade author, **Jen Carney**, tells us all about her fantastic series *The Accidental Diary of B.U.G.* and reveals her tips on how to write comedy in fiction.



CAN YOU TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOUR SERIES *THE ACCIDENTAL DIARY OF B.U.G.* AND WHERE THE INSPIRATION FOR YOUR MAIN CHARACTER, BILLIE UPTON GREEN, CAME FROM?

The Accidental Diary of B.U.G. is a contemporary comedy series firmly rooted in reality. Each book is narrated by Billie Upton Green, a sparky ten-year old who sneakily 'repurposes' boring old spellings practice jotters into diaries that she doodles and writes in when she should be going to sleep. Billie's funny observations on life knit together so that each book tells a story. In *The Accidental Diary of B.U.G.*, for example, the story is about a thief in Billie's school.

Billie was inspired by my son. He wanted to read a funny book in which the main character was happy, feisty, and had two mums, like him.

YOUR BOOKS HAVE BEEN PRAISED AS 'PERFECT FOR FANS OF TOM GATES, WIMPY KID AND JACQUELINE WILSON'. WHAT WAS YOUR INITIAL REACTION WHEN YOU FIRST HEARD THIS?

I was filled with joy and a little nervous! These are marvellous books and wonderful authors! I was aware that Liz Pichon's Tom Gates books were real gateways to reading for children sometimes classed as reluctant readers, so that was a real compliment for me as I'd written the first book to appeal to

that market – my son hated reading for a long time and these were the kinds of books that piqued his interest. He moved on to *Wimpy Kid* after Tom Gates and I think the B.U.G. series sits well between the two. As for being compared to Queen Jacqueline – what could be better! She's a wonderful writer who kept my daughter entertained every night for many years.

YOUR MAIN CHARACTER, BILLIE, OFTEN FINDS HERSELF IN THE MIDDLE OF SURPRISES AND HILARIOUS HAPPENINGS. WHAT DO YOU FIND IS THE HARDEST THING ABOUT WRITING COMEDY?

“I think it's vital that children have access to books that both mirror their lives and provide a window into the lives of others.”

Trying to come up with jokes and laugh-out-loud moments can be hard while staring at your keyboard! Fresh air helps loads, as does life in general. Also,

finding the right balance for your target demographic can be tricky – not under/over-estimating their ability to infer.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO ASPIRING WRITERS WHO WANT TO WRITE COMEDY?

Keep a pen and paper on you at all times. Inspiration comes from all sorts of places when you least expect it. Read your work aloud and test things out on your target age group. Be prepared to cut LOADS when no one laughs! Think back to when you were the age your main character is. What did you find funny? Read other writers' books and

see what makes you laugh/smile.

WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT WRITING A SERIES AND HOW DO YOU COME UP WITH NEW IDEAS?

I like being able to develop characters; not just Billie but the secondary ones too. I'm constantly coming up with new ideas, so a series gives me opportunity to explore them more fully without trying to squeeze them into one book. It's also great to be able to carry themes through a series. So, in this series, acceptance of differences, navigating a new friendship, adoption and The Biscuit Laws run through all the books.

As for new ideas, I think about my life, and that of my children and those that I have taught and play around with ideas until I have something I'm happy with.

YOUR MAIN CHARACTER, BILLIE, IS ADOPTED BY HER TWO MUMS AND HAS A LARGER-THAN-LIFE PERSONALITY. HOW IMPORTANT DO YOU THINK IT IS FOR CHILDREN TO READ INCLUSIVE BOOKS?


I think it's vital that children have access to books that both mirror their lives and provide a window into the lives of others. Age-appropriate, inclusive books really help children to empathise with people who are different to themselves and broaden their knowledge of our world and the people who live in it. Similarly, reading books about people a bit like them, or someone in their family,

can really validate a child's experience of life.

ARE THERE ANY OTHER AUTHORS OUT THERE WHO YOU ADMIRE AND, IF SO, WHY?

I read loads and there are so many authors I admire. A few to mention are Sarah Hagger-Holt who isn't afraid to tackle same-sex parenting head-on, Louise Gooding who is an amazing advocate for inclusion, Maisie Chan who brings other cultures into popular fiction, Emma Mylrea and Heneka Statcher whose world-building is brilliant, Joanne O'Connell whose book, *Beauty and the Bin*, I thought was a brilliant novel for bringing food waste issues into children's lives, Jamie Russell who is building a fantastic series to engage gamers and entice them off their consoles, and Louie Stowell whose comedy skills are top notch. I could go on!

ARE ANY MORE BOOKS FROM THE ACCIDENTAL DIARY OF B.U.G. SERIES ON THE WAY?

At the moment, B.U.G. is a three-book series. However, the door has been left ajar on it, and I'd love to write more in the future. At the moment I'm working on a new comedy series targeted at the same age range. Watch this space! 

(CHECK OUT JEN'S WRITING PROMPT

The Biscuit Laws form a big part of
The Accidental Diary of B.U.G. series.
Choose one or both of the following options:

Jen's Writing prompt:



- a. Think about your favourite biscuit and write a law that tells people exactly how they should eat it. Mention other biscuits this law could apply to and give your law a very official-sounding title ending in a word like commandment, decree, charter or verdict.
- b. Invent your ultimate dream biscuit. Doodle it and write a paragraph to describe what it's made of, what's in it, what's on it, are there any hidden surprises? Is it wrapped? Can you dismantle it?

We'd love to read what you come up with. Send your writing to:
paperboundmagazine@outlook.com

JEN CARNEY

Jen Carney is a children's author-illustrator living in Lancashire. Co-mum to three children, Jen is passionate about the representation of different family units in children's books and promoting reading for pure pleasure.

The Accidental Diary of B.U.G. is her debut comedy series.



Follow Jen on social media:

Twitter: @jennycarney Instagram: @jencarney76

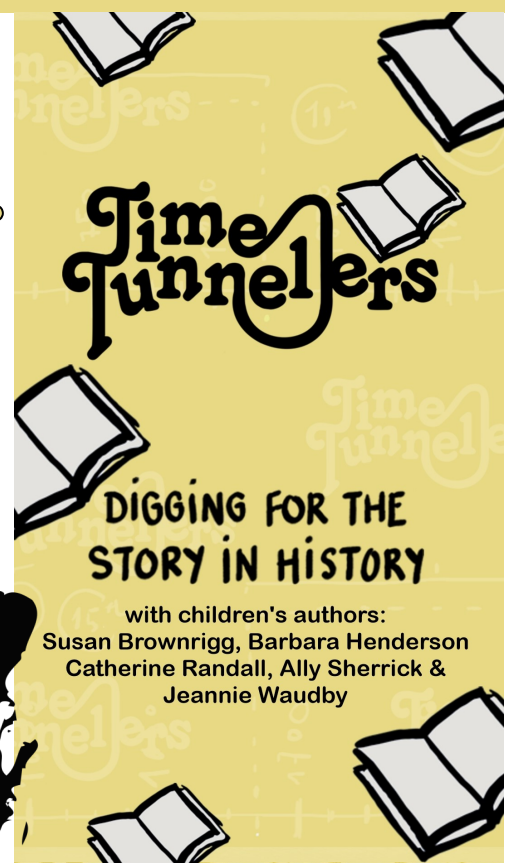
Facebook: @AuthorJenCarney TikTok: @jencarney



The Accidental Diary of B.U.G. series is published by Puffin and out now in the UK and Commonwealth, with some titles available in European territories.

WHY HISTORICAL FICTION MAKES FOR GREAT ADVENTURES

THE TIME TUNNELLERS IS A GROUP OF FIVE AUTHORS WHO WRITE HISTORICAL FICTION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE: **ALLY SHERRICK, BARBARA HENDERSON, CATHERINE RANDALL, JEANNIE WAUDBY AND SUSAN BROWNRIGG**. EACH WEEK, THEY TAKE IT IN TURNS TO WRITE A BLOG ARTICLE ABOUT AN INTERESTING ASPECT OF HISTORICAL FICTION, AND ALSO PUBLISH A CREATIVE WRITING CHALLENGE INSPIRED BY THE PAST ON THEIR YOUTUBE CHANNEL, AIMED AT SCHOOLS.



HERE ARE FIVE REASONS WHY THEY THINK THAT HISTORICAL SETTINGS MAKE FOR THE BEST KIND OF ADVENTURES!

1. NO ADULTS - CATHERINE RANDALL

The most distinctive thing about children's adventure stories is that the people having the adventures are children: they're the ones solving the mysteries, cracking the codes and generally saving the day. This can be a lot easier to achieve in historical fiction.



For a start, it's much easier to get rid of unwanted adults. Early death was (thankfully) more common in the past, so an author can easily kill off parents who might get in the way of an adventure by demanding that you're back in time for tea or noticing that you haven't been home for three days. And although life in the past was in some ways more restricted, children also had more freedom to have adventures because there was no 'Health and Safety', and fewer rules. Until 1880, it wasn't even compulsory to go to school. It all adds up to loads more opportunities to get into exciting adventures!



2. HIGH STAKES - ALLY SHERRICK

In all children's adventure stories, the perils and pitfalls the protagonist faces must be great. But if the story is set in the past, you have all sorts of nail-biting – and sometimes plain gut-wrenching – choices available to you to really turn up the heat. For example in my first book, *Black Powder*, set at the time of the

infamous Gunpowder Plot, my hero, Tom Garnett is

in a race against time to save his beloved father from hanging after he is sentenced to death for giving refuge to a priest.

Spoiler alert: Not only does Tom pay a visit to the notorious Clink prison and experience first-hand the appalling conditions the prisoners are kept in, but he also has to steel himself to make a journey to the dreaded Tyburn gallows to witness a public execution. The stakes – a product of the dark days of religious persecution in Tudor and Jacobean England – really couldn't be any higher.



3. PERILOUS JOURNEYS BARBARA HENDERSON

Transport was tricky, wherever in the past you choose to land your story-dart. Nevertheless, despite the dangers, people often ventured far. *The Chessmen Thief* has my young protagonist sail from Norway to the Hebrides in a Viking longship, battling whirlpools, waves and enemy warriors. The seas were the busy highways of the day then, but with no rescue services of any kind, every threat offers the reader a new thrill.

I love the fact that the poet Robert Burns, in his role as an Excise officer in my novella *Black Water*, can't just hop onto a speedboat to arrest smugglers on a stranded ship – no, he must wade across quicksand into the icy waters of the Solway Firth 'with pistol and sword', while being fired at with carronades – and this really happened! Even on land, walking or travelling on horseback offers much scope for adventure, from stubborn stallions to highwaymen.



TECHNOLOGY - JEANNIE WAUDBY

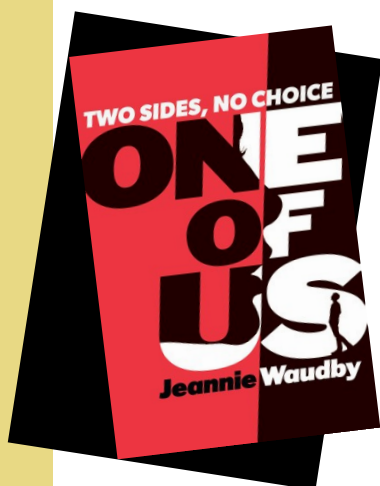
From the Stone Age to the 20th century, the one thing historical stories have in common is their lack of modern technology.

I think the alternatives create exciting opportunities. If a character fails to rendezvous, they can't immediately explain, opening up fresh adventures. To communicate, characters may have to gallop

through the night, row across a stormy sea, post a letter and wait weeks for a reply. Their life might hang on a message that never arrives. So in sending a message, the stakes can be very high.

The book I'm working on features a 19th century typesetter who has to set each letter by hand to bring out the newspaper. She travels over 600 miles from the Highlands to London by boat, coach, steamship, train and on foot. That seems slow to us, but to her it is incredible to travel so far and so fast.

Even the physicality of past technologies makes them exciting: the wax-sealed letter, horseback messenger, words leaping out of a newspaper.



HISTORICAL LIGHT RELIEF - SUSAN BROWNRIGG

Historical adventures are often full of drama, danger and dilemmas – so it is important to balance all that tension with some light relief. Luckily the past has plenty of opportunities for adding humour to stories. Banter between

friends, an animal sidekick or just someone falling on their bum can all work well!

Look at photographs and pictures from the past – even from just a few years ago – and you may well think 'What on earth were they wearing?' Strange haircuts, oversized underwear and fashions from other eras can all provide funny moments. Toilet humour never goes out of date, be it a Tudor chamber pot tipped over a villain's head or a faulty Victorian flush. If writing a time slip, your character will be a fish out of water – have fun showing them misunderstanding how things work, eating revolting food or being bamboozled by old fashioned language.



FIND OUT MORE

CATHERINE RANDALL'S debut, *The White Phoenix*, is a children's historical novel set in London, 1666, and published by The Book Guild.

ALLY SHERRICK is the award-winning author of *Black Powder*, *The Buried Crown* and *The Queen's Fool*, all published by Chicken House.

BARBARA HENDERSON is the author of five historical novels for children, all published by Cranachan. The latest is her Viking adventure *The Chessmen Thief*, an origin story for the famous Lewis Chessmen.

JEANNIE WAUDBY'S dystopian YA novel *One of Us* is published by Chicken House. She is now working on a historical book for teens.

SUSAN BROWNRIGG

is the author of *Gracie Fairshaw and the Mysterious Guest*, *Gracie Fairshaw and the Trouble at the Tower* and *Kintana and the Captain's Curse*, all historical fiction and published by UClan Publishing.

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A Lasting Impression

by Brian U. Garrison



I want to travel back in time
to hear Tyrannosaurus roar
(from a safe distance away
where I won't smell her breath).

I want to find a footprint in the clay
and make an impression of my own,
tiny as her toenail, that will harden
and mystify the fossil hunters of the future.

I want to return to the current era
to attend the scientific conference
where my footprint's finder
presents to a skeptical audience.

I want to approach the podium,
cast off my shoe,
slide off my sock,
hold up my foot,

and unlock the secrets of the past.

Brian U. Garrison

Brian U. Garrison never goes time traveling after midnight. He hangs out with his nerdy friends in the Science Fiction and Fantasy Poetry Association. You might spot him in the wild if you visit Portland, Oregon or out Dino-watching.

www.bugthewriter.com

@bugthewriter (Twitter & Instagram)





TALKING HISTORY

150 YEARS OF
SPEAKERS AND SPEECHES



AN INTERVIEW OF JOAN HAIG AND JOAN LENNON
BY JOAN HAIG AND JOAN LENNON

HI, I'M JOAN.
AND SO AM I.

SO, LET'S TALK *TALKING HISTORY: 150
YEARS OF SPEAKERS AND SPEECHES*

JOAN L. TO JOAN H.:

Where did the idea for the book come from?

JOAN H.:

Well, when I was at school one of my teachers used to play us vinyl records of famous speeches while we sat knitting. The voices and stories from the past had a lasting effect on me. Much later, I was on the lookout for a kids' book on the topic – but it didn't exist! So, over lots of pots of tea, we put our heads together and decided to write it ourselves.

JOAN L.:

Do you remember those first versions of the book – the coloured pen



diagrams on big sheets of paper that we did on your kitchen table? We were so excited – and so rubbish! Thank goodness they asked André Ducci to do the artwork! Even he said he found it a challenge representing so much information in a few pages. We found that too, didn't we? And only having room for 16 amazing speeches out of so many was hard too. Who didn't make it into the book that you wish could have?

JOAN H.:

I still have some of those original scribbles

we made! I also have the first list of speeches we drew up. On it was an emotional surrender speech by Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce or Niimípuu people of North America. Like the speeches that did end up in our book, the speaker's voice is distinct and carries us back to a powerful moment in history. What about you?

JOAN L.:

Early on, I was keen to have a section on technology – a history of who hears what and how, and how can you trust the source.

Newspapers, the invention of photography, radio, cinema newsreels, TV, internet and social

media. In the end, there wasn't room in *Talking History* – and really, it's more of a whole new book on its own!

JOAN H. TO JOAN L.:

What favourite story about the speakers who *are* in the book wasn't there room for?

JOAN L.:

There was the one about Abraham Lincoln's beard. All American Presidents have been men so far, but only 5 of them had beards while in office - and Abraham Lincoln was the first! There is a story that, during the campaigning for the election, an 11-year-old girl called Grace Bedell wrote to Lincoln and suggested he would look better with a beard. She couldn't vote,

being 11, but more importantly she never *would* be able to vote, being female. Still, 'All the ladies like whiskers and they would tease their husbands to vote for you and then you would be President.' That story really makes you think! How about you?

JOAN H.:

In the book, we tell the story of Winston Churchill's lisp. As a child, he went to a

speech therapist to try to 'fix' his lisp. But, as a politician he realised that his distinctive way of speaking — could be a strength — it made his voice more recognisable, especially over radio. So he had special false teeth made to help him

keep his lisp. That's in the book, but here is a bonus fact – one set of Churchill's upper dentures sold at auction in 2010 for over £15,000!

What about favourite chapters from the book – did you have one?

JOAN L.:

If I had to choose just one, maybe it would be the chapter on Helen Keller. The 1962 movie *The Miracle Worker* had a big effect on me when I first saw it when I was growing up and ever since. I love the way Helen Keller was interested in so many issues, equal rights but also votes for women, the fight against racism, an end to war. And the story of

DO YOU REMEMBER THOSE FIRST
VERSIONS OF THE BOOK – THE
COLOURED PEN DIAGRAMS ON BIG
SHEETS OF PAPER THAT WE DID
ON YOUR KITCHEN TABLE? //

Braille is a fascinating one.

JOAN H.:

For me, I think it would be Nelson Mandela's 'Statement from the Dock'. I grew up in Southern Africa and he was one of my childhood heroes. Perhaps because I already knew so much about the story, I also found it one of the hardest chapters to write – we couldn't include everything!

JOAN L.:

Some of the chapters were definitely harder than others. There was such suffering in the backgrounds of so many of the speeches that we tried really hard to be true to. And yes, each chapter could make a whole book on its own! Keeping within a few beautifully illustrated pages was a challenge. But sometimes things that would take many words to get across were made clear with a single image. It was amazing working so closely with the designer Adam Allori and the artist André Ducci, to bring the story of each speech and speaker to life. And it was fascinating to learn how André worked from historical photographs of people and places, first sketching on paper and then transferring the images to computer. It's hard to choose, but did you have a favourite bit of André's


artwork?

JOAN H.:

André makes big, bold statements, but there are also little gems – like the cat and mouse image in the chapter on Emmeline Pankhurst. I would love to have a framed print of each chapter opening – they would definitely brighten up my walls!

JOAN L.:

I love André's sense of humour, too. In the parade scene in the chapter on Harvey Milk, he drew a big floating dog balloon, in honour of Milk's Pooper Scooper bill. And the way he illustrated the different signposts at the end of each chapter, suggesting where the reader might like to go next, is so creative. And the way each chapter had different colours and layouts – there was never a dull moment!

**FROM THE TWO JOANS – we hope you enjoy
Talking History as much as we have!
And what comes next? There *is* another
book in the pipeline from Joan Haig,
Joan Lennon and André Ducci...
Watch this space! **

Talking History: 150 Years of Speakers and Speeches is
OUT NOW and published by Templar Publishing

JOAN HAIG

Joan Haig grew up in Zambia and Vanuatu and now lives in Scotland, where she is a lecturer and writer. In 2020 Joan edited *Stay at Home: Poems and Prose for Children Living in Lockdown*. Her novel, *Tiger Skin Rug*, was nominated for the Carnegie Medal.

www.joanhaigbooks.com/
Instagram/Twitter: @joanhaigbooks

JOAN LENNON

Part Scottish, part Canadian, Joan Lennon is a novelist, poet and non-fiction writer living in the Kingdom of Fife, Scotland. Her historical novels for 8 to 12-year-olds include *The Wickit Chronicles*, *The Slightly Jones Mysteries* and *Silver Skin*.

<https://joanlennon.co.uk/>
Instagram: @joan.lennon.359

Book Review Corner

THANKS SO MUCH TO ALL OUR REVIEWERS. IF YOU'D LIKE TO WRITE A REVIEW FOR OUR NEXT ISSUE, CHECK OUT THE DETAILS ON OUR WEBSITE: WWW.PAPERBOUNDMAG.COM/SUBMIT

BLOOD TO POISON BY MARY WATSON REVIEWED BY PAPERBOUND

COMING SOON

Blood to Poison is a YA novel with a fresh take on the fantasy genre, full of magic, curses, vivid settings, and deliciously detestable villains.

Set in South Africa, with a history of slavery and apartheid, Savannah is the latest in a long line of cursed women. The curse dates back to their ancestor, Hella, who cursed the descendants of her tormentors, although she did not know at the time that she was carrying one inside her. Hella's girls, they call them. And Hella's girls are always angry, especially just before they die.

Savannah is a brilliantly fierce, kind, and strong character, who isn't afraid to stand up for the wrongdoings she witnesses. But, with each outburst of anger, the curse gets stronger, and Savannah's time is running out. She needs to find a way to break the curse. To save herself, and the generations to come. It doesn't help that there's a new menacing witch in town, one that has taken a special interest in Savannah.

This story is bold and shines a light on issues, both past and present, such as racism, sexism and violence. Although initially the anger that the curse brings is considered a weakness, Savannah comes to realise that it can also be a strength and justified.

The book is filled with an assortment of brilliant characters, from aunties and uncles, to cousins, neighbours and old friends – each fully realised on the page. The thin veil that separates our world from the magical one is expertly described and visually absorbing. If you enjoy stories about magic and secret societies, with twists and strong female characters, this one is definitely for you.

BLOOD TO POISON IS PUBLISHED BY BLOOMSBURY AND RELEASED 14TH APRIL 2022.

Note: this book deals with some mature issues and themes.



MORE REVIEWS

CAMERON BATTLE AND THE HIDDEN KINGDOMS BY JAMAR J. PERRY

REVIEWED BY PAPERBOUND

MG

Cameron Battle and the Hidden Kingdoms is a wonderfully exciting book full of adventure and heart. When Cameron gets transported through *The Book of Chidani* to the Hidden Kingdom, it's up to him – with the support of his friends Zion and Aliyah – to help the Queen and save the Kingdom.

The relationships between the characters are so strong and loving: between Cameron and his friends, Cameron and his grandmother, and especially with his parents who, even though have passed, still play an important role in Cameron's life and sense of identity.

The book is proudly seeped in West African culture, and it doesn't shy away from the harsh realities that dragged Cameron's ancestors from the Kingdom. The tight storytelling that shows the emotions and connections between the characters and the setting, as well as whisking you away into a magical world, is what makes this book great, and perfect for any middle grade fan who is seeking awesome action.

CAMERON BATTLE AND THE HIDDEN KINGDOMS WAS PUBLISHED ON 3RD MARCH 2022 BY BLOOMSBURY



RECENT RELEASE

WHEN THE WAR CAME HOME BY LESLEY PARR

REVIEWED BY PAPERBOUND

MG

Following her debut, *The Valley of Lost Secrets*, Lesley Parr does not disappoint with her new historical novel *When the War Came Home*, set in a Welsh village during the aftermaths of World War I, exploring emotional themes of workers' rights, shellshock and PTSD.

When Natty moves from her home to a new village because her mum has to look for a new job, she doesn't enjoy starting a new school and moving in with her aunt and uncle, especially when she's got to share a room with her chatterbox cousin Nerys. But when she befriends a soldier with amnesia in the village, she realises she might be able to help, so determines to solve the mystery of who this soldier might be all by herself, and maybe even help others along the way.

This novel swept us away with its words, characters, and authenticity, and we loved every minute of reading it. We can't wait to see what Lesley Parr writes next.

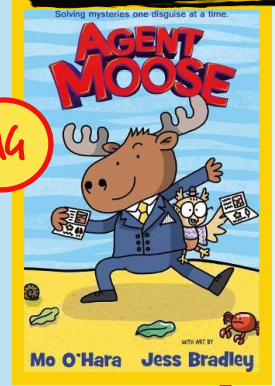
WHEN THE WAR CAME HOME IS PUBLISHED BY BLOOMSBURY AND OUT NOW.



RECENT RELEASE

AGENT MOOSE BY MO O'HARA
ILLUSTRATED BY JESS BRADLEY
REVIEWED BY PAPERBOUND

RECENT RELEASE



A thrilling mystery with bucket loads of humour, *Agent Moose* by Mo O' Hara is an exciting graphic novel chapter book, the first in a series that promises adventure and quirkiness. The bright artwork is paired with brilliant characters, which makes for a smashing read that you can come back to time and time again.

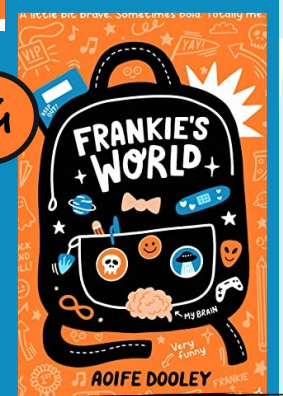
After Agent Moose makes a blunder on his 100th case, he is quickly ridiculed by the whole of Woodland HQ. But when a missing animal is reported at the same time as a party for Agent Camo Chameleon is held, it's up to Agent Moose and his trusted (and possibly much smarter) friend, Owlfred, to solve the mystery. Together, they must battle a race against time to solve the disappearance of Terrance Turtle and regain Agent Moose's popularity from Woodland HQ, all while sporting terrific disguises.

A fantastic mystery full of adventure and inside jokes between the artist and the reader, *Agent Moose* is a graphic novel guaranteed to make you smile.

AGENT MOOSE IS PUBLISHED BY SCHOLASTIC AND OUT NOW

FRANKIE'S WORLD BY AOIFE DOOLEY
REVIEWED BY PAPERBOUND

Frankie's World by Aoife Dooley is a wonderfully fun graphic novel about self-acceptance and self-discovery. With vibrant illustrations and artwork that shares Frankie's story, this graphic novel is a must-read if you want a book that represents characters with autism in a sensitive way, while also dealing with issues such as bullying, parenting and family relationships.



RECENT RELEASE

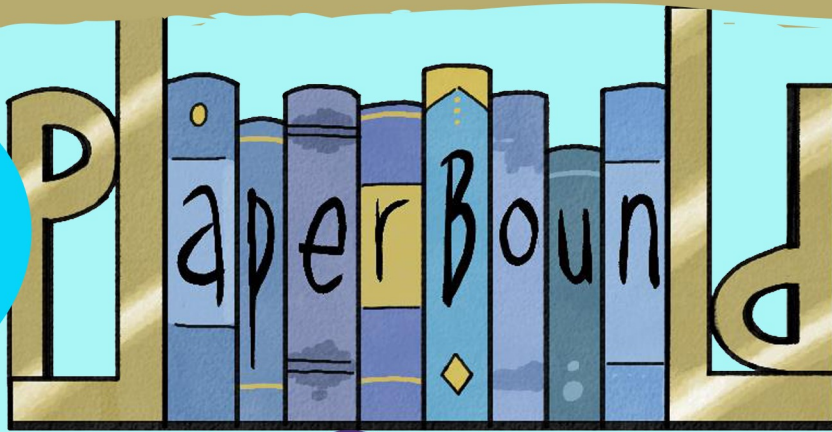
Frankie's voice is open, warm and honest, and readers will fall in love with her sweet and spunky nature as they join her antics that lead to Frankie becoming happier and more comfortable in her own skin. This hilarious and laugh-out-loud yet sensitive debut from Aoife Dooley is a graphic novel full of wit and humour, for anyone who has ever felt different.

FRANKIE'S WORLD IS PUBLISHED BY SCHOLASTIC AND OUT NOW!

IF YOU'D LIKE TO REVIEW A BOOK FOR PAPERBOUND, WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU. SEE HOW YOU CAN GET YOUR REVIEW IN THE NEXT ISSUE ON OUR WEBSITE: WWW.PAPERBOUNDMAG.COM

IF YOU'RE A PUBLISHER OR AUTHOR, AND WOULD LIKE US TO REVIEW A NEW RELEASE, WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU TOO. PLEASE GET IN TOUCH: PAPERBOUNDMAGAZINE@OUTLOOK.COM

DEADLINE:
MIDNIGHT
15TH APRIL
2022



2022 COMPETITION FOR YOUNG WRITERS 11-16

THE SHORTLIST WILL BE
JUDGED BY THE WONDERFUL
SARAH DANIELS
AUTHOR OF UPCOMING
YA DUOLOGY
THE STRANDED
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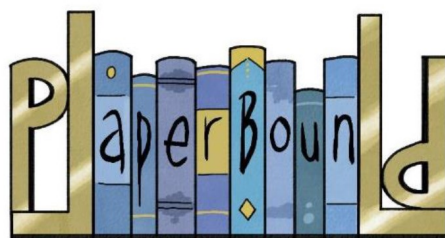
ALL SHORTLISTED ENTRIES WILL
BE PRINTED IN OUR SUMMER ISSUE IN
JUNE 2022, AND RECEIVE A SMALL PRIZE.
THE WINNING ENTRY WILL ALSO RECEIVE
A £15 BOOK TOKEN AND OTHER WRITING
AND BOOK RELATED GOODIES.

HUGE THANK YOU TO CROWVUS FOR BEING THE 2022 SPONSORS OF
PAPERBOUND'S COMPETITION FOR YOUNG WRITERS



www.crowvus.com

DEADLINE:
MIDNIGHT
15TH APRIL
2022



2022 COMPETITION FOR YOUNG WRITERS

WE ARE THRILLED TO ANNOUNCE THAT PAPERBOUND IS RUNNING ITS WRITING COMPETITION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AGED BETWEEN 11-16 AGAIN IN 2022!

We absolutely loved reading all your wonderful writing in 2021 and can't wait to see what you all come up with this year. You can read all about the 2021 competition on our website: paperboundmag.com. Just like last year, we are looking for writing in the form of **short stories, flash fiction or poetry**, with a maximum word count of **500 words**, no lower limit. The writing should be written by, and aimed at, young people between the ages of 11-16. We are excited to read a range of writing, so we are leaving the theme up to you. Work must be the entrant's own original work and should not have been published anywhere else. Competition opens 1st February 2022.

ENTRIES WILL BE JUDGED ON:

- Ideas and how these are organised
- Creativity
- The appeal to the reader

We won't be judging you on spelling and punctuation.
If you are shortlisted, we will help get your writing ready for publication.

PRIZES: All shortlisted entries will be printed in our summer issue in June 2022, and receive a small prize. The winning entry will also receive a £15 book token and other writing and book related goodies.

JUDGE: The shortlist will be judged by the wonderful [Sarah Daniels](#), author of upcoming YA duology *The Stranded*. The first book is out this July and published by Penguin.

TO ENTER: Complete the below application form and send it along with the entry (word doc only please) to paperboundmagazine@outlook.com (form can be scanned or a photo as long as we can clearly read it). Ensure that a parent or guardian has signed the form, and that they send it on behalf of the entrant. Please write PaperBound Competition (followed by name of the writer) in the subject line. Competition is **FREE** to enter. **Closing date: Midnight Friday 15th April 2022** and is open to UK residents only, aged between 11-16 on the closing date. Any entries received after this date will, unfortunately, not be entered. Shortlisted writers will be informed in May 2022. Winner will be announced in the summer issue of PaperBound.

Name of entrant: _____

Title of writing: _____

Age (must be between 11-16 on closing date: April 15th 2022): _____

Parent/ legal guardian name: _____

Parent/ legal guardian email: _____ (we will use this to contact shortlisted entrants)

Parent/ legal guardian telephone number: _____

Parent/ legal guardian signature: _____

X

(My parent/ legal guardian consents to my participation in this contest)



We are incredibly grateful to this year's sponsor, **Crowvus**. Their support means we can provide lots of brilliant goodies to the shortlisted and winning young writers.

New Writing
PG

This stunning illustration is by
Sara Netherway
Find out more about Sara on page 74

The White Cliffs of Dover

by Chrissy Sturt



SARA NETHERWAY

Nearly there, mouths Mama, face scrunched gainst the sea.

I feel inside parts of me unscrewin – looser, looser – only this lifejacket holdin me together. The next jolt drivin every tooth into my skull. Waves comin too loud for me to hear Mama, as she lurch over the rubber side to grasp a snippity bit of rope, stringed along the outta edge. *Hold it*, she mean. Makes me sway less but still we go *slam, slam* over humps like whales as the rope cut into my hand, fill it with salt sting.

Mama? I cry.

She all empty out, just one message in the press of her lips – *we must endure, sweet*.

The boat dip lower. More wet slurp in. Look at us miseryies, stuffed tight and vinegary as Mamas pickles. All hunchin backs and dipped heads turnin blurry in the spray. They tire, too? Tire from this fight with the sea? It drag on too long, now. Im not allowed such thoughts. *Donch you be so bleak sweet*, Mama always say.

So like her, I try close my eyes. There was a time ... The Befores. Is this where she disappear, behind close lids? When sea meant fish and food and fine things. Maybe Mama cast back further, to the fables? When blue ocean plashed our country like a cat tongue – lap, lap lapping that plentyfill land into paradise. The time of turquoise, turtles, light, laughter.

Before the After.

I only know the After.

When the sea reach up to tear at thatch and bamboo. Vanish homes, piece by piece. Drown fields, poison wells, and—*donch you think of it*—seize Papa like a prize as we scream our throats hoarse. Spindly as a stick, he swim after our cattles, while they go honkin their fear, horns spinnin in brown floods. *Papa!*
Papa!

Now the same sour sea suck and sigh its way into me, soakin my shoes until ... wait ... did my toes wash away? I wiggle. Still join on, just.

Mama catch my eye, jerk her chin toward sudden cliffs. *Wah!* My heart, it beat glad to glimpse them great chunks, marbled white as a feast of meat. Home

to them peoples what turned the sea bad and let our land be took; what left us low and islandy, outta sight outta mind. Until we flee, and journey hard. Always cold and hungry.

Mama shoutin bove heavin waves. “You remember what to say, sweet, when we arrive?”

Yes, I nod.

I dont flinch no more as hard drops cuff my cheeks. *Please mighty ocean, deliver us to safety? Remember, it aint our fault?*

But the motor, it make bloody gurgles. I know a death rattle when I hear it. The man in charge – he spring up, wrestle, wrench a cord.


And a wall of glassy water risin into a sharp point right over his head.

Wishing to flip us over, tip us out.

My legs fly away.

Mama!

Souls scatter.

And the sea, she gulp me whole. 

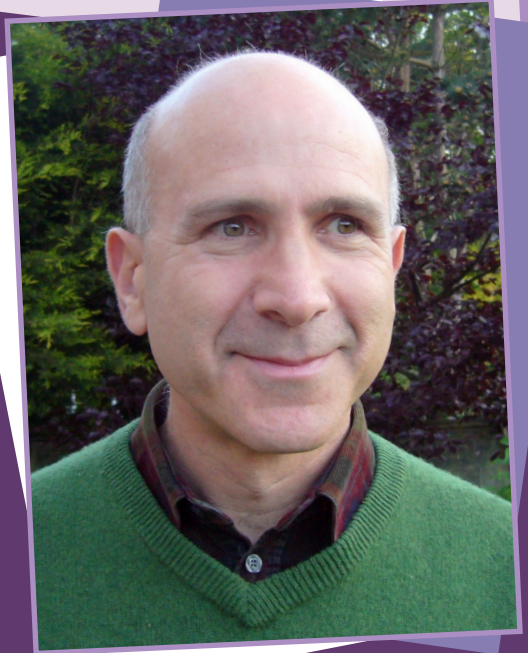
Chrissy Sturt

Chrissy Sturt is on a lifelong adventure with words. A freelance journalist, she writes flash, short stories, children’s books and is researching her first historical novel. She lives in Hampshire with one husband, two children and a multitude of peculiar pets.

Follow Chrissy on Twitter: [@ChrissySturt](https://twitter.com/ChrissySturt)



MARK BALLABON



EXCLUSIVE

WE SPOKE TO MARK BALLABON ABOUT THE INSPIRATION BEHIND HIS NOVEL, *HOME: MY LIFE IN THE UNIVERSE*. KEEP READING FOR AN EXCLUSIVE EXTRACT AND SNEAK PEEK OF SOME OF THE BEAUTIFUL ILLUSTRATIONS YOU'LL FIND INSIDE.

WHAT IS YOUR NEW BOOK *HOME* ABOUT, AND WHERE DID THE INSPIRATION COME FROM?

Leah's story was inspired by an event in my own life which happened when I was 8, and by teenagers around the world who I've met in recent years – five of whom became part of a young editing team who I worked with on this book. I've spent many years listening to their greatest hopes and fears, and to their conviction that their generation can bring change. They all share a quest to understand their place in the world and develop lasting relationships.

Home is the story of 14-year-old Leah's challenging and enlightening journey to discover herself. She faces confronting issues to do with bullying, self-esteem and body image, but they help define who she is.

It's an unusual experience with the stars however, which triggers her adventure to discover what home really means. Is it a place inside? Is the planet our home? Or the universe? A defining moment is her clash at summer camp with climate activist Kayleigh in a filmmaking project, skilfully mediated by youth leader Tanguy. The adversity helps her towards becoming more fearless and proud of who she is.

I'm hoping that young people around the world will not only be able to relate to Leah's story, but also to her philosophy and passion for change. As the story unfolds, the realisation grows in Leah that our first home is inside ourselves, and that the climate *in* us directly affects the climate *around* us.

A bookseller summed up *Home* well: "*It gives you an outlet to explore important, pertinent questions about who you are and where you belong... and leaves you with a different, more hopeful way of looking at the world around you.*"

AS WELL AS BEING AN AUTHOR, YOU ARE ALSO A PHILOSOPHER AND ENVIRONMENTALIST.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE GROWING UP IN THE WORLD TODAY?

Every relationship you'll ever have in life is determined by the one you build with yourself. So find fresh ways, each day, to appreciate and respect your own feelings and ideas. Trust your own instincts, regardless of popular opinion or peer pressure.

If you want to know yourself and others better, make a start by choosing three qualities that you would most want to seed and grow in yourself. Perhaps patience, or curiosity, or gratitude. Developing qualities, consciously, is one of the best ways to

build an inner strength and a peace of mind with who you are.

As Leah discovers, most of the guidance that you seek in life is at home, deep inside yourself, and out there in the wildness and ways of nature. We are born with the greatest technology on earth – our own mind.

THE ILLUSTRATIONS INSIDE *HOME* ARE BEAUTIFUL. DID YOU ALWAYS IMAGINE THERE

WOULD BE ILLUSTRATIONS INSIDE THE BOOK WHEN YOU WERE WRITING IT?

— Yes! In all the books I've written, I've never considered working without an illustrator. To me, an illustrator is a crucial partner in

developing a story, events and characters. A good illustrator is someone who adds depth and character, in ways that words alone cannot bring.

It's like a Christmas tree. The writer uses words like coloured lights to feature the beauty of a tree's shape and appearance. But an illustrator can hang silver and gold balls, little bells and ornaments, and even put a fairy on top. To the viewer or reader, this offers a much more enhanced experience.

For young adults, the matching of words and illustrations offers an opportunity to experience the story multi-dimensionally and with every part

“ TRUST YOUR OWN
INSTINCTS, REGARDLESS
OF POPULAR OPINION OR
PEER PRESSURE. ”

of their being – from their mind, brain and soul, to their feelings and intuition.

So words and images which marry well together, can make a book into more of an immersive Imax theatre experience than a flat-screen TV one.

WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING A WRITER, AND WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO ANY YOUNG ASPIRING WRITERS?

In my view, an authentic writer, who is passionate about writing, is a person who is trying to get closer to understanding themselves and the world they find themselves in. Writing is part of that self-discovery journey.

It is not *who* writes a book as a first principle, it is *what* writes the book; in other words what are the motives, needs and conflicts which drive their story. Then comes the joy and industry of allowing creativity to flow; to express original concepts, storylines and characters in the most engaging way.

Write because you want to, because you're moved to, because you enjoy it – not because you want to impress anyone or be world famous or sell a million books. If that happens along the way, then great, if that's what you want. Although you must recognise the statistical reality that only a few percent of writers earn a decent living doing it. These days though, with multimedia, success can come in so many different ways; from writing a blog or self-publishing to reading your work on

YouTube or reciting a poem on Tik Tok. Be creative.

Some of the greatest writers that I have read were never popularised, never got the breaks or simply were never able to promote their work. One of my favourite books of all time was written by an unknown author, and their book sold no more than a few hundred copies. But for me, it is priceless and has helped me in every aspect of my life.

So it depends how you evaluate success.

MARK BALLABON



Mark Ballabon is a philosopher, author and environmentalist. *Home: My Life in the Universe* is his fifth book, but his debut in young adult fiction. Mark's previous books have been non-fiction and based on philosophy and personal development. He has been giving talks and workshops on these subjects around the world for the last three decades.

TURN OVER FOR AN EXCLUSIVE
GLIMPSE INSIDE *HOME*



EXCLUSIVE SNEAK PEEK INSIDE THE
NEW NOVEL, *HOME: MY LIFE IN THE
UNIVERSE* BY MARK BALLABON,
INCLUDING BEAUTIFUL ILLUSTRATIONS
BY GRANT MACDONALD

HOME

EXCLUSIVE



EXTRACT FROM *HOME* BY MARK BALLABON

“So you’re saying, Kayleigh, that unless there is more urgent action on climate change, unless we treat it as a crisis, it will be impossible to live on this planet. You’re saying that we have no other home?”

“Well... yes,” she said, nodding uncertainly. She seemed reluctant to call the planet our home, but she couldn’t deny it and didn’t push back.

A silence echoed around the gym. Everyone was waiting.

“So, Leah, why do you want to make a film about ‘home’?”

I closed my eyes and tried to go deep inside myself. What did ‘home’ really mean to me? This was about much more than a film.

“I know people think that where they live is their home. Of course. I live in London, England, part of the UK, part of the world. But then our world, our planet, is also part of a solar system, part of a galaxy, part of a universe. It’s all connected, isn’t it?”

So when I see the moon or stargaze, I’m looking into the universe... that’s our greater home. Does that make sense?

My friend Maia once explained to me that what’s out there is also down here. ‘As above, so below’, she’d said. Like, there’s oxygen up there and we breathe it down here... and there’s



Illustration by Grant MacDonald

iron up there, but also here in our blood...”

I felt like I was entering a dream state, and everyone was probably thinking I’d totally lost the plot. Yet when I opened my eyes, I saw everyone looking intently back at me, even Kayleigh and Helena.

“So I think everything’s connected. Maybe everything’s inside everything else, like those ‘nesting dolls’. There’s our small home here on earth... and we live inside a much bigger home out there.”

“Right. Mmm... I think I’m following you so far. But what will be the message of your film, then?” asked Tanguy, narrowing his eyes as he rubbed his chin.

“Well, if we don’t understand that home isn’t just our local address, how can we feel a part of the world or a part of the whole universe?

And if we don’t treat the planet as our home, how can we protect her?

If we can’t protect her, we have no home.” 



Illustration by Grant MacDonald



HOME

Home will be launched on Earth Day, April 22nd this year. It will be published by Eminent Productions in the UK and Ireland and exported around the world.

It’s available for pre-order at Waterstones, Bookshop.org and Amazon now. The ebook will also be available for exclusive early download from 25th March 2022.

Home: My Life in the Universe is written by Mark Ballabon and illustrated by Grant MacDonald



Freelance editing

Services:


- **Proofreading**
- **Copyediting (line edits, sentence structure, writing style, clarity, etc.)**
- **Developmental editing (structural suggestions, character development, continuity, etc.)**

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SURVIVOR OF THE TWO MOONS

by Catherine Cawley

Blood pooled in Hudson's neck, damp on her skin. Her right arm was numb. Acrid smoke crammed her mouth. She smelt fuel, tasted burnt electricals.

Something sparked and spluttered. Someone screamed. A female voice, sweet and song-like, interrupted: the computer. It carried on repeatedly. Hudson could take no more, and swore until her lungs hurt.

Silence.

The fires crackled and spat. Electrics hissed. The computer remained still.

'Hudson... that you?' The voice belonged to the screamer.

Hudson attempted to move. She twisted and fought.

'Hudson?' Panic in the voice.

'Yeah, yeah, it's me. You okay?'

'Do I sound okay? Where's the commander?'

'He might be unconscious,' Hudson said.

'I've been yelling for hours. Except for that computer, no one's replied.'

Hudson pulled free from the bulkhead that was pinning her down. She touched her right arm, eerily blue in the light of the fires. Not broken. Not dislocated. She let out a cry.

‘What is it?’

‘Cramp.’ Hudson flicked the emergency back-up and a few lights danced into life. ‘Gallas, where are you?’

‘Just find the commander.’

Hudson pulled an extinguisher off a wall and put out the fires. They sizzled and foamed, and left behind the stench of choking smoke. The computer started up again.

‘Shut that thing up, can’t you? What happened?’

‘Crash landing.’ Hudson struggled over debris.

‘Is that it?’

‘I’m not the navigator, that’s your job. We were off course.’

‘Okay, okay. Found the commander yet?’

Hudson saw a foot.

‘What we doing here, Hudson, out here in the Wastelands?’

‘Making money for the company.’

‘I was making money for myself. Didn’t you lie about your age?’

‘Something like that. So much for my new start.’ Hudson pushed aside some metal plates.

‘What is it?’ Gallas asked. ‘He’s dead, isn’t he?’

Neither spoke for some time. The computer told them they had landed, and it was now time to disembark. The back-up lights fizzled out. The computer died with them.

Hudson found a torch, then found Gallas. Both his legs were broken, the left leg crushed. A pool of viscous blood had spilled across the craft where he lay. Hudson scrambled for a med-kit, gave Gallas a jab, applied a tourniquet to his bleeding leg. She dragged him from the wreckage. The ship’s fuel tanks were leaking and there was nothing she could do to stop them. She left Gallas beside a rocky outcrop, then returned. A whine, a crack, another explosion deep within the ship. She sent an SOS, and tipped as many supplies as she could out of the craft.

She got herself to safety when the craft exploded. The engines flamed for three Earth hours. Hudson wanted to weep. Her training wouldn't allow for that. She set up camp next to Gallas; heater, two lights, survival equipment.

When they had crashed it had been daylight. Now it was dark.

'At least the air's breathable.'

'I can't feel my legs,' Gallas said.

'They're still there.'

'That's so reassuring.'

The planet had two moons. They were in shadow that night, a slither of gold from the nearest, the other hidden behind the first. The only light given off was the emergency artificials Hudson had set up.

'The ship's almost burnt out,' she said. 'I'm going down to see what I can find.'

She left Gallas surrounded by heaters and light and, with a torch, struggled over rough terrain towards the smoking craft. She collected extra heaters, another light, food and blankets.

There was something different about Gallas on her return. He was cool and unmoving.

'Gallas, Gallas.' Hudson pulled a med-kit towards her. 'What do I need? Gallas?' Her voice was strained in the double moonlight.

Gallas was silent. Hudson cried out. She started resuscitation. She worked on him for nearly one Earth hour. She could do no more.

She was alone.

Alone on this planet.

She sat huddled, her back chilled against a wall of rock, a dead man at her feet. Fear kept her awake. She buried Gallas beneath a cairn of rock. Thunder shattered the sky. Icy rain splattered her face. A bitter wind chipped at her overalls. She needed shelter. The light of her torch spied a narrow gully.

The entrance was cold and dark. Jagged rock towered up. Lightning flashed and she saw the terrain. Barren and broken. She crouched low, thinking of Gallas and shivered. Scuffling came from around the ship. Staring into darkness, she heard the noise

again, closer.

She was not alone.

Rain fell. A lightning spark and something slithered behind rock. Her torch slipped through clammy hands. Hudson staggered through the pass. The black night stung her eyes. Heavier rain came. Rocks rattled down the cliff face. Her fingers tripped along the gully side, following every crevice, rough and sharp like splinters on her skin. Then a cross wind, unbalancing. A crack of light, and Hudson glimpsed a dark mass at the furthest end of the gully.

The persistent lightning and her rapid breathing merged into one. Wet rock pressed against her body. She stayed in rain and wind, fighting unconsciousness until dawn. Grey light lifted across the planet, and the sky changed into a myriad of colours. Light from the first sun seared across the landscape, hitting Hudson like a fierce fire. The second sun rolled into the world, and she felt her whole body warmed.

The pass was empty. She heard nothing, saw nothing. The camp supplies had been untouched. But the rock protecting Gallas's body had been disassembled. Blood trailed across the ground. His body had gone.

Hudson looked at the buckled craft, at the place where she had buried Gallas. She collected her supplies.

A purple flower, the only bright colour in the landscape. Growing beside the gully, its petals newly opened in the dawn light. Hudson cradled the blossom in her trembling hands. She walked out that morning into the sunrise. She climbed up to the pass and walked through the rocks.

She did not look back.

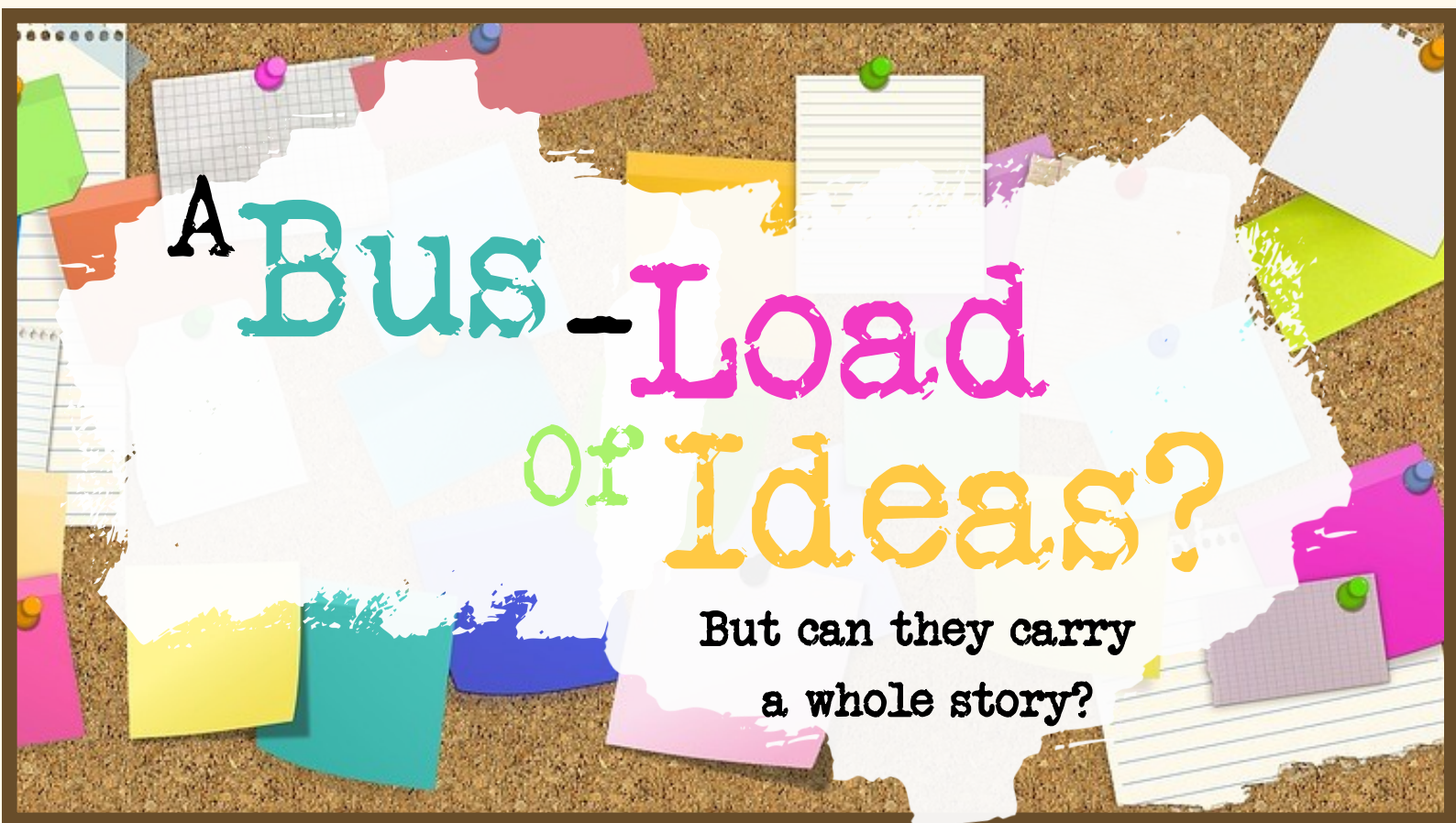
CATHERINE CAWLEY

Catherine Cawley is a middle grade writer of historical fantasy and is currently working on a time-slip novel. She has been shortlisted and published for a number of short stories and micro-fiction in online magazines.

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A Bus - Load Of Ideas?

But can they carry
a whole story?

Author and editor, [Emma Read](#), shares her tips on how to tell
which of your ideas has the most potential

What do story ideas and public transport have in common? You've all heard the one about waiting ages for a bus, only for three turn up all at once? Well, let's take that metaphor even further.

Some buses take you all around the houses before you get to where you want to go.

In other words, you have a great-sounding idea, but you don't quite know where it's heading and you end up getting lost.

Some buses are dirty from overuse, and you can't see anything out of the window.

That is to say, your idea isn't new enough, it doesn't feel fresh, and you can't see how to make it interesting and unique.

Some buses are overcrowded. You have to stand for the whole journey and you're flat-out tired by the time you get to your stop.

So, perhaps your idea has become overloaded. It's too full of characters and places and things happening, and it's exhausting to even think about and you're overwhelmed by it.

Time to ring the bell and hop off this metaphor! Let's look at how we can choose the best idea – one that's going to see us safely and comfortably to our chosen destination.

Assessing an idea for its potential

Here are some tips and techniques to help you choose which of your ideas is most likely to develop into an exciting, compelling tale:

- Take a poll. Write your ideas down and ask your friends to pick their favourite.
- Wait a week or two, then ask yourself, which idea have you been thinking about the most? Have you been daydreaming about it, or writing bits down?
- Which one of your ideas already has a character in it? If you've given the story to a character already, be it the main character, or the villain, it might be a clue that this is the one.
- Can you write a pitch for it?

This last point is the one I'm going to explore a little more – this is my go-to trick to assess my ideas.

But first – what *is* a pitch?

A pitch is a way of summarising your whole story in just a couple of sentences.

Think about the book you're reading at the moment ... imagine telling that story to someone, all 200 plus pages of it, in one paragraph. Have a go!

One way to approach this seemingly impossible task (and the one I think most helps you choose a great idea) is to answer the following:

- Who is the main character?
- What do they want?
- What's stopping them reaching their goal?
- What will happen if they don't get it?

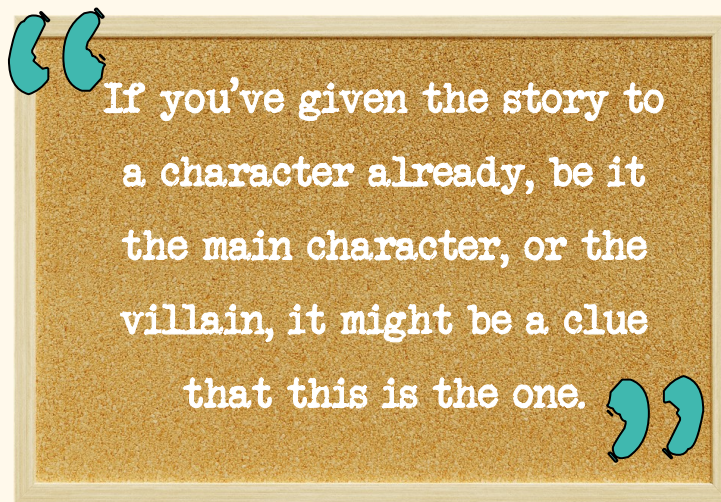
In other words : Character/Goal/
Conflict/Stakes

Here's a pitch I wrote for my first book,
Milton the Mighty:

Tiny spider Milton, branded deadly by tabloids, risks a squishing to save his species by starting a 'web' campaign – with a house-human!

Character: *Milton*

Goal: *Save species by starting web campaign*




Obstacle: called ‘deadly’ in the news

Stakes: *A squishing!*

Usually, if you can figure out all four elements for your idea, then you can build a story around that structure. Think of those four things as the legs of a table (or, the wheels of a bus!) They are the things that give it stability and stop it toppling over.

Most stories need these four things – we need a character to care about, and that character has to want something – this is the core of the story. Think about your favourite book – what is the main character striving for?

Then again, we don’t want our character to get what they want *too* easily. Someone or something has to get in their way, and preferably, often.

And finally, does it even matter? What does the character risk on their journey? A reader wants to care about the character reaching their goal, so there needs to be something important at stake, whether it’s saving the world, or just surviving school. 

Wishing you the very best of luck
with your ideas!

Emma

Emma Read

Emma Read is the author of *Milton the Mighty* and *Milton the Megastar*, and provides specialist children’s fiction editing as EmDashED. Find her on social media at: @em_editorial (Twitter) and emdash_ed (Instagram)

Have your first page edited for free at:

<https://emdashed.com>



by Judith
Crow

Baba's Guard

'Baba?'

Joseph's voice squeaked as he crept out of the room and looked around. The house was big. The kind of big you could get lost in. But, having grown up in the draughtiness of an ancient castle, Joseph's second love of Baba's house was just how warm everything always was.

His first love had disappeared. The guard, who should be standing at the end of the drive, was no longer there. It should have been Paul – he had the night shift on Tuesdays, taking over from Abigail – but there was no sign of him. There was always a guard at the entrance to Baba's house and once, when Joseph had been staying there, he had asked his godfather why.

'Do you need them to protect you?'

Baba's broad smile had stretched across his chubby face. 'They don't protect me,' he had replied, tapping the side of his nose with his finger. 'They protect the queen's secrets.'

Joseph loved the idea of the queen keeping secrets in the house, so he made friends with the guards. There were ten of them altogether, working a pattern of shifts which Joseph had recorded himself and kept written down on a folded-up piece of paper in his drawer. From his window he could watch them. They always waved when he turned off



the lights before bed.

As he crept through the corridors, letting his bare toes wiggle into the carpet, Joseph wondered how he could protect the queen's secrets when he didn't know where they were. He knocked on the door to Baba's study and, when there was no answer, he pushed the door open.

That was wrong too. There was no way Baba would ever leave his study unlocked if he wasn't inside. Joseph knew: he had tried the door enough times to be certain of it.

'Baba?' he whispered again. Turning around, Joseph shuffled further along the corridor and was about to descend the stairs when he heard someone breaking glass downstairs. He wondered if he had heard it in his stomach rather than his ears, as his insides lurched at the sound.

'Come on,' hissed a woman's voice. 'Stop being a wuss.'

There was a strange laughter to the voice, and Joseph wondered how anyone could find it funny to break into a house. He crept down the first couple of stairs and peeked through the gaps in the banister. Joseph didn't know either of the two people now standing in the entrance hall, but he guessed from their build that there was a man as well as the woman.

'Alive,' the woman said, as the man looked down at something in his hands. 'Luc wanted him *alive*, and we didn't go through all this just to fail at the final hurdle.'

'And you're sure he lives alone?' the man asked. 'This is a massive house for someone on their own.'

'No partner,' the woman said, clicking her tongue. 'No children. His mother's with him sometimes, but not at the moment. Luc's had Eye and Vee on her for the past week. Now's our chance.'

Joseph froze as he realised the impact of the woman's words. They weren't after the queen's secrets at all: they wanted Baba himself. And they believed there was no one else in the house, so it was down to Joseph alone to save his godfather. Remembering what he had been taught at school, he hurried back up the stairs to Baba's study and grabbed the phone.

The line was completely dead, and the silence he pressed against his ear was

terrifying. He didn't have a mobile phone: there was no signal at his house, and Dad said it would only get him into trouble if he took one to school.

Tiptoeing out of the study, Joseph tried to calm his nerves as he crept along the landing and down the stairs. His heart was going much faster than his feet, so he was worried it might trip him up, but he managed to make it to the bottom, where he stood for a moment. Then, he took a deep breath and got down onto his hands and knees to creep through the hall and in the direction of where he could hear voices. In the sickly blue glimmer of the security light, he could make out where broken glass was scattered across the floor.

'It's hardly a secret,' Joseph heard the woman's voice snap. 'Come on. Tell me.'

'I can't tell you what I don't know.' Joseph wondered how Baba could sound so calm.

'But you *do* know!'

There was a *pop* and a strange clicking sound. For a while, nothing else was said. Then, Joseph heard the man speaking.

'Alive. Remember?'

The woman made a growly noise and Joseph crept further into the room, crouching behind the tall lamp. He could see the two people standing in front of where Baba was passed out on the sofa.

'It's only a taser, Ess.'

'There's nothing 'only' about it,' the man said. 'He's a heart attack waiting to happen anyway. And you'll be the one to explain if we don't find out where it is.'

Joseph was starting to be very worried that his thumping heart could be heard across the room so, trying to ignore the repeated lurching of butterflies in his stomach and the trembling in his hands, he picked up the cast iron doorstep.

He had one chance to do this. If he didn't throw it far enough, the intruders would immediately know where to look for him but, if he threw it too far, they might not even hear it at all. His hand was slippery with sweat, and he could smell the metal as it pressed against his damp palm. For a moment, he couldn't bring himself to take the chance, certain he would fail.

Baba stirred, and Joseph watched the woman roll up her sleeves. He didn't know – and didn't want to know – what she was about to do, but he knew it was time for the distraction. He hurled the doorstop as far as he could, then listened with dizzying relief and satisfaction as it shattered the glass table in the conservatory. The man and woman both jumped, and Joseph felt a smile flutter around his lips.

‘There's someone else here,’ Ess hissed.

‘The guard? You said you'd dealt with him.’

‘This was no-kill, Are,’ the man replied. ‘He had enough sedative to knock him out ‘til dawn, but perhaps there's someone I missed.’

The pair of them shuffled through towards the conservatory, their weapons stretched out in front of them. Joseph took a deep breath and scurried after them, ignoring the carpet burns on his hands and knees as he tried to move as fast and low as he could. He made it to the doorway into the conservatory and, with what he thought might be his last moment of courage, he slammed the doors and locked them.

The intruders ran over and began hammering on the glass. They would be through in only a moment. Joseph spun around as the other door burst open.

‘Stay down, Joe,’ he heard Paul's voice say. His gun was pointing in the direction of the conservatory, and Joseph crawled back over to the sofa to sit at his godfather's feet. Baba put his arm protectively in front of his godson.

‘Are you hurt, sir?’ Paul asked, not even looking at the figures on the sofa, but keeping his attention fixed completely on the conservatory.

‘No,’ Baba said. ‘Not even a scratch.’

Joseph looked up at his godfather, who placed a finger over his lips.

‘They said they'd drugged you,’ Joseph whispered to Paul, who did not look back for a second as he gave his answer.

‘Because idiots forget that any decent stab-proof vest is resistant to a hypodermic too. I felt the blow to the head though.’

Joseph watched as Paul kicked open the door. Things became a bit of a blur after that but, after a lot of screaming and shouting, more guards arrived and Ess and Are were dragged from the building in handcuffs.




Less than an hour later, Baba walked Joseph to his bedroom door and wished him goodnight as though nothing strange had happened.

‘Baba,’ Joseph whispered. ‘I don’t know if they took anything.’

‘They weren’t thieves, Azizam,’ Baba replied.

‘They wanted the queen’s secrets, didn’t they? What if they took them without us noticing?’

‘The queen’s secrets,’ Baba said, tapping the side of his head, ‘are all in here. And how could they take them while you were there to protect me?’

Joseph grinned at his godfather’s words and then closed the bedroom door. He hurried over to the window and looked down to where the guard was standing in their usual place beside the gate. He raised his hand in a wave and felt a buzzing sense of pride as the guard raised theirs in a smart salute to him. 

Judith Crow

Judith was born in Orkney, grew up in Lincolnshire, and now lives in the far north of Scotland where she teaches P2/3/4 and gets bossed around by her spaniel. Judith’s most recent book is *Honour’s Rest*, which was shortlisted in the Eyelands Book Prize 2021 and selected as a top book for teens by the Scottish Book Trust.

www.judithcrow.co.uk

You can follow Judith on Twitter: @jayzed_kay



PRINTABLE

ACTION/ADVENTURE

WRITING PROMPTS

Cut out the characters, settings and things and place them upside down in three separate piles (or use little bags). Take one from each pile until everyone has a different character, setting and thing. Now create a story that includes all of these features. You could even use this in a classroom — just print out several copies so you have enough options for the entire class.

CHARACTER	SETTING	THING
DIVER	MOUNTAIN	MAP
INVENTOR	UNDER WATER	GADGET
RESEARCHER	FOREST	TORCH
EXPLORER	CITY	SKATEBOARD
SUPER-HERO	SKY	BACKPACK
SPY	LABORATORY	COMPASS

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COMPETITION FOR YOUNG WRITERS!

FREEWRTING

Jayne Leadbetter, who has illustrated several features in previous issues, has shared this wonderful illustration with us. You can find out more about Jayne on page 74.

Set a timer (1, 2, 5 minutes — you decide). Using the image as a starting point, begin writing and don't stop until the timer has run out.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Anthony

Interview

Burt



We chatted with **Anthony Burt** all about his fab debut novel, *The Animal Lighthouse*



Could you share a little about your new book, *The Animal Lighthouse*, and the inspiration behind it?

The Animal Lighthouse is a middle-grade adventure story with a classic *Treasure Island-Jungle Book* feel to it. Set on a secret island somewhere in the Caribbean in 1704, it's about a boy called Jim Rogers who washed up on the beach (as a baby) in a barrel of rum.

Jim has been brought up by animals and he knows no other life but that of a lighthouse keeper. The animals are his family, and have kept him safe, until one day a thief steals the lighthouse bulb filaments. And, whilst on the mission to find the thief, Jim learns secrets about his family's piratical past and pirates invade the island to try to take him away.

A warm-hearted adventure with lots of animal antics, gross stuff, and action-packed moments, *The Animal Lighthouse* came about because I spent all my childhood playing and walking around Portland in Dorset, under the watch of the Portland Bill lighthouse. I also used to live near Moonfleet, where Blackbeard smuggled his loot, so – along with my love of animals – I combined all the elements I love to create the kind of fun-filled, epic middle-grade story I'd want to read if I were that age again!



One of the main characters is Oskar the orangutan, an older animal who loves to invent things and always showing Jim how to repair the lighthouse. Oskar is based on my late grandad, a very special and magical man, who I spent many happy years learning skills with like gardening, painting, building, fishing, and cooking. Oskar is Jim's father-figure until he discovers who his real pirate father is...



This is your first middle grade book, but you've also written a picture book. What do you enjoy about writing for young people?

Yes, I've also done a STEM-based picture book for young children called *The Wish Fish*. That's about two kids who want to fix their grandad's broken old boat but don't believe they can. Until, that is, the Wish Fish comes along and shows them they do have the skills to do it!

I love writing for children because you can let your imagination run wild, have lots of weird stuff happen in your stories – like talking animals – and children will go along with it. I think there are a lot more rules in depicting “real life” in adult novels, so I much prefer the freedom that writing for children gives me. I love to create worlds that are fun and magical too – worlds children want to be in.

This issue is an action/adventure special, and *The Animal Lighthouse*

sounds full of action and adventure with pirates, animals, gadgets, and mysteries. Can you tell us a little about how you prepared writing in this genre?

I did A LOT of research on lighthouses and how they work! This included discovering how different metal filaments work inside lighthouse bulbs for the thief part of the story. And, because my book is set in 1704, I needed to depict very old lighthouses, so I visited one of the oldest in the world in Portland, Maine, USA. The Portland Head Light was built in 1791 and it has an amazing museum inside it with loads of information about the lights, structures, and internal gadgets. Most people don't realise that lighthouses were invented over 2000 years ago, but I found some amazing examples that were in existence in the UK at the time my book is set.

The lighthouse in my book is very special too, because beam “three and a half” does something a bit magical,

using line-of-sight illusions, to hide Jim's island. This "magic" is based on a real-life, light-bending phenomena called a Fata Morgana Superior Image. Look it up, it's very cool! I also learnt loads about how different animals move in real-life for this story as I wanted each one to have their unique personality and movement.



There are illustrations in this book that complement the story. How important are they to you as the author?

There are 50 illustrations in this book, and I am utterly blown away by how beautiful, fun and clever they all are. Ciara Flood is so talented, and she has the kind of classic adventure illustration style that really helps bring to life the characters' personalities and the book's exotic settings. Although not all middle-grade fiction has illustrations, I think when they're done really well, they add a level of intrigue to the story as well as an accessibility to the book itself for the more reluctant readers.

What are your top middle grade recommendations for readers right now?

I adored *October; October* by Katya Balen – it has such beautiful writing and gives the reader a really different point of view on the world. My fave comedy series at the moment is *Knight Sir Louis* by the Brothers McLeod, and *Song for a Whale* by Lynne Kelly about a deaf girl's struggle to help a songless whale be heard is beautiful too.

Do you have any tips for anyone thinking of writing an adventure story?

With adventure stories, even though it's often about exciting action scenes you really mustn't neglect the 'quieter moments'. These are the moments where we get to know the characters and what they want, and of course why they're on this adventure in the first place. Without this, the action scenes will feel emptier and almost pointless. So, write fast-paced scenes, but make them matter! 📖



Try Anthony's writing prompt:

Imagine you live in your own magical lighthouse and there's a bad storm on the horizon. Write a stormy adventure, create characters you live with (and describe how they help you) and, importantly, what special magical gadgets or powers your lighthouse has.

We'd love to read what you come up with. Send your writing to: paperboundmagazine@outlook.com or enter it into our competition!

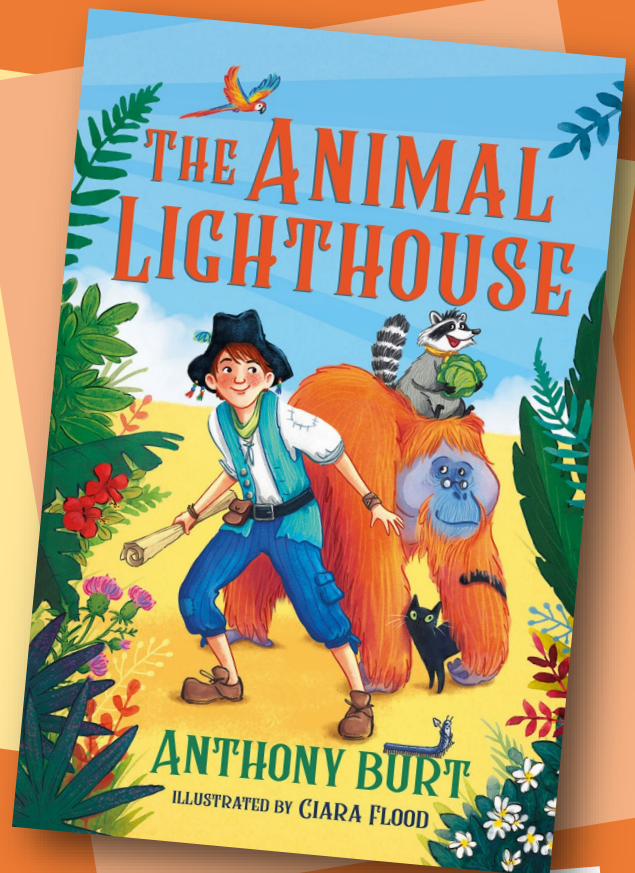


All illustrations by Ciara Flood as seen in *The Animal Lighthouse*

Anthony Burt

Anthony Burt is a qualified teacher and experienced youth worker, working across primary, secondary and college education, mostly with children with SEND. He has been a book festival host at the Edinburgh Book Festival, written for Disney, BBC Doctor Who magazine, Nickelodeon, CiTV, Macmillan and he lives in Frome, Somerset with his black cat, Watson.

www.anthonyburt.com



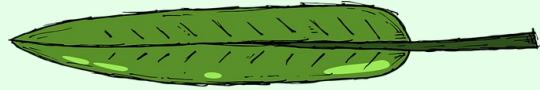
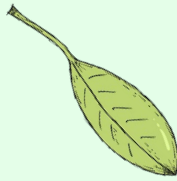
The Animal Lighthouse is out 12th May 2022 and published by Guppy Books. It is available in the UK, but will soon be out in America and other European countries.

Follow Anthony on social media
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Instagram: @anthonyburt4
Facebook: Anthony Burt



Children of The Woods

by Rachel Keating



There was an inevitability about it, the way the blade entered her. He knew that it would kill her. Just one movement is all it took. The weird thing is that, at the precise moment when he took her from us - her children, I'm not sure that he even wanted to. It's not that he *didn't* want to either — he could have stopped himself and spared her. It's that he didn't care either way it seemed; death is just the way it went, this time.

Oak, beech, hawthorn. We're surrounded by trees, some with trunks so large it would take this despicable man and three others to hold hands in order to reach all the way around. Perfect hiding places, indeed many animals are doing just that right now — scarpering into hollows and flitting away from this hideous scene that has no place in the middle of these majestic woods. But we cower in the undergrowth next to her, fixed to the spot, small and still in the dense shade.

The man turns, she's not even

dead yet and already he's finished with her. We're relieved though, he's walking away. His heavy boots crunch through a floor that's alive. We're safe, for now. We can have our last moments with her privately. Of course, the connection we have isn't something that can be seen anyway—that bond between parent and child, it's like no other.

These woods are big. It's not the amount of trees here that tell you that; it's the air. The air is completely different to other places—cooler, moister, richer. The fresh atmosphere whispers of the size and greatness, at the same time as the canopy of leaves above shows the intimacy to be found here too. Mother nourishes us with what I know are her last reserves. It's like she's pumping everything into us, from her body into ours. She talks to us, she tells us about the danger, she tells us that we're loved.

There are actually scores of children in these woods on this drizzly spring day, being taken care of by their parents. He's amongst the others now, the man. I can feel the screams through the earth. It's the parents he wants.

The sun tracks westwards across the sky and the woods are quiet now. Time simultaneously means everything and nothing. What happened to the rest of them? We already know but we don't want to. We haven't moved from our places. This is our woods now, if we can survive on our own.

'Y'know trees talk to each other. Through their roots.'

A new voice. A human voice.

'Oh really,' comes the response.

They are close, these two people. Right next to me in fact. A boy and his mother out for a walk in the woods.

'Yeah,' he continues. 'They send nutrients to each other, carbon and stuff. The mother trees even favour their own saplings. Mum, y'know baby trees are called saplings.' He looks down, lips pouting in concentration as he reads out loud from a book...

'Trees talk to each other through a complex network hidden underground.'

As he reads he leans on our mother and traces his little fingers with ease through the deep fissures of her



bark. He stops at the top of the stump—her open wound bearing the chainsaw marks.

‘The network is made of fungi which connect the roots of different trees. This is known as a mycor... rizz... Mum, how do you say this word?’

The lady is distracted.

‘Hmmm? Let me see,’ she says before noticing. ‘Oh careful! Don’t touch that, it’s been felled recently. You might hurt yourself.’

He lingers though, reluctant to pull his hand away completely.

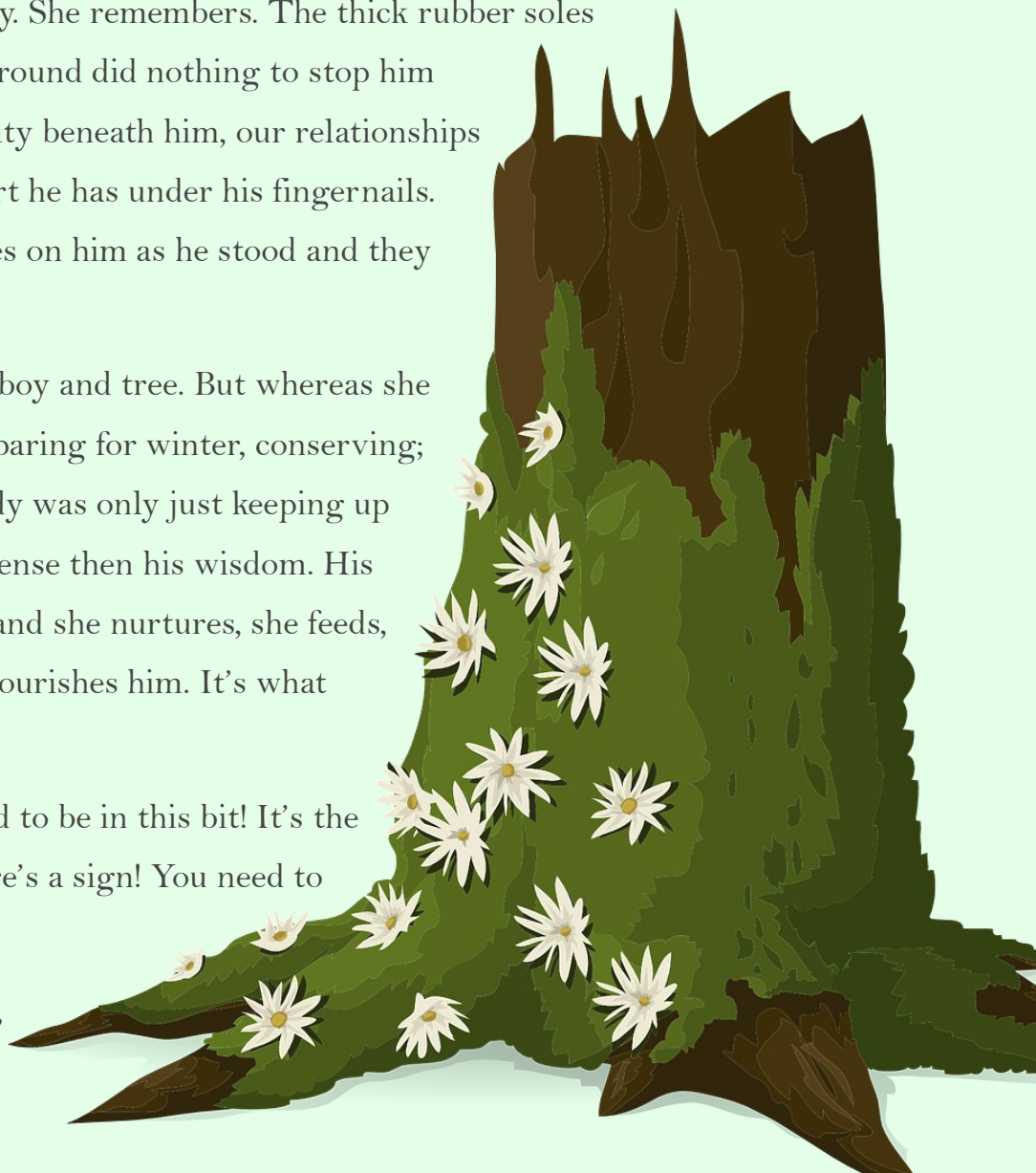
I think he can hear us, this human child. He’s listening in on our underground conversation as our mother prepares us for our future without her as best she can. Our bendy stems reach only up to the boy’s knee. Our leaves are so young and fresh, paler than our mother’s. There’s not enough sunlight on this part of the woodland floor, she’s been sustaining us, feeding us, nurturing us until we’re old enough. That’s what mothers do.

With her help we’ve grown so fast from the acorns she dropped in the autumn. He visited us then too, this boy. She remembers. The thick rubber soles between his feet and the ground did nothing to stop him feeling the thrum of activity beneath him, our relationships playing out in the same dirt he has under his fingernails. Our mother shed her leaves on him as he stood and they were still.

Still, but busy, both boy and tree. But whereas she had been reabsorbing, preparing for winter, conserving; he was expending. His body was only just keeping up with his mind. She could sense then his wisdom. His own mother knows it too and she nurtures, she feeds, she gives of herself and nourishes him. It’s what mothers do.

‘You’re not supposed to be in this bit! It’s the start of the clearing! There’s a sign! You need to leave!’

The man. He’s back,




calling loudly to the boy and his mother as he approaches. He treads the same path as they did, only differently.

‘Oh, we didn’t realise,’ she’s saying, instinctively leaning towards her son and flashing him a look of warning, his eyes and body responding by mirroring her — mother and child speaking the visceral language of protection.

‘Well, there’s a sign.’

‘We didn’t see it.’

‘Right, just go back the way you came. This area is being felled. We’re due to be chopping more today.’

‘No,’ said the boy. 

Rachel Keating

Nature and children's literature are huge passions of Rachel's. Mix them together and it doesn't get much better as far as she's concerned! Rachel is about to be querying agents with her MG novel about a girl who connects with nature in an extraordinary way. The book features OCD, a theme very close to her heart.



Follow Rachel on Twitter [@RachelCKeating](https://twitter.com/RachelCKeating)

Winner

Why we love *Children of the Woods*

Children of the Woods is a beautifully written and timely short story that we all instantly loved. It isn’t always the easiest theme to read about, but Rachel has produced something very special about the action we as humans need to consider.

We all felt *Children of the Woods* was an original take and really thought-provoking and that is why we have chosen it as our **Spring 2022 Submission Winner!**

Congratulations, Rachel!

A little prize will be on its way to you soon.

ANSWERS ON PAGE 75

Illustration by the
brilliant

**RACH
REITZ**

You can find out more
about Rach on page 74

QUIZZES

HOPE YOU ENJOY HAVING A GO AT THIS ISSUE'S QUIZZES. ALL THE ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND IN THE PAGES OF THIS MAGAZINE. DON'T FORGET TO TRY THE ANAGRAMS DOTTED AROUND THE PAGE TOO. THE ANAGRAMS ARE ALL BOOK TITLES THAT CAN BE FOUND ON THIS ISSUE'S BOOKSHELF.

1. UK INKY (CO)EDITORS

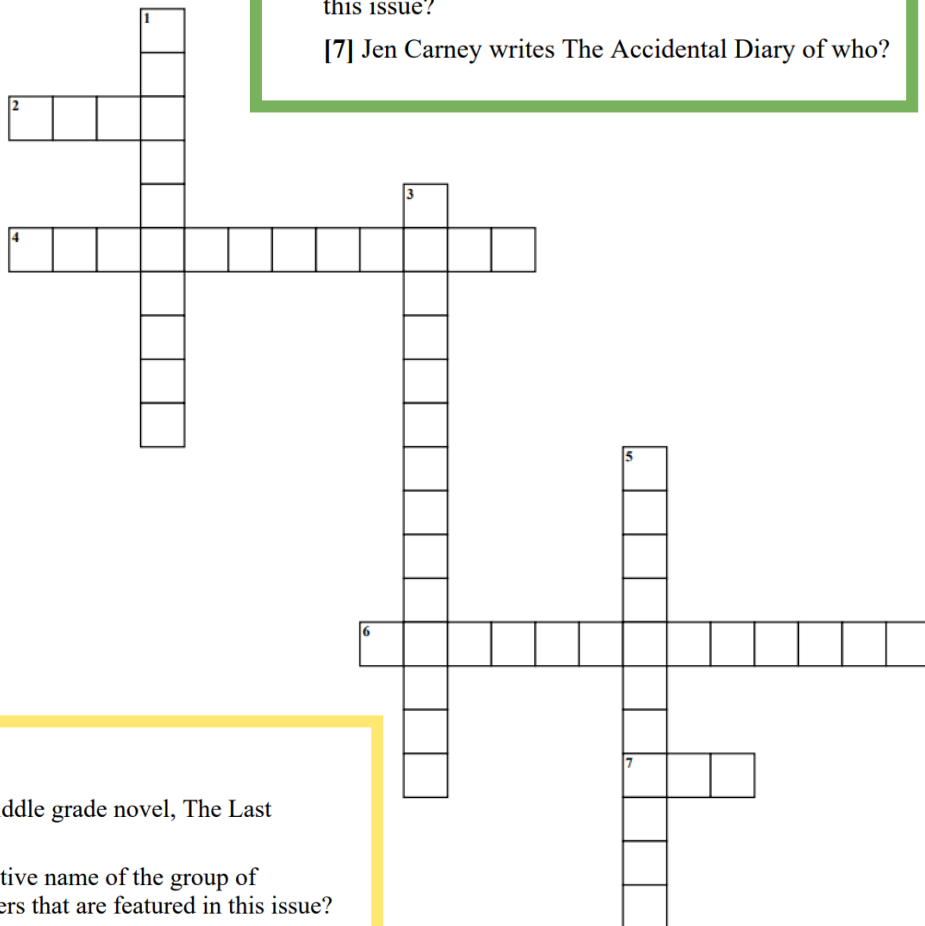
Across

[2] We have featured an exciting sneak peek inside a novel by Mark Ballabon this issue. What's the title?

[4] What is the title of Gabriela Houston's debut children's novel?

[6] What book by Mary Watson have we reviewed this issue?

[7] Jen Carney writes The Accidental Diary of who?

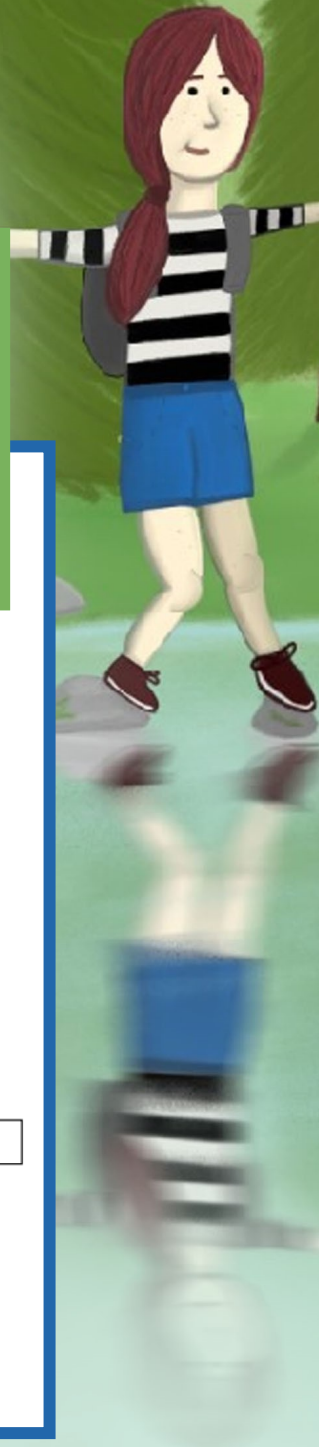


Down

[1] Who wrote the middle grade novel, The Last Firefox?

[3] What is the collective name of the group of historical fiction writers that are featured in this issue?

[5] Who wrote the middle grade novel, The Animal Lighthouse?



Let's GO EXPLORE

2. (EO THREW WEE WIN(ES

3. UNMEAN BOAS



4. AH GOOFY WATERS

TREASURE
HERO
MOUNTAIN
SPY
CHASE
ADVENTURE
SECRETS
QUEST
MAP
VILLAIN
LAKE
ACTION

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Interview

Gabriela Houston



We caught up with Gabriela Houston to find out more about her middle grade debut, *The Wind Child*, full of magic, friendship and adventure



*Your book, **The Wind Child**, is a beautiful, heartfelt tale of loss, adventure and belonging. Can you tell us a little more about the inspiration behind it?*

The Wind Child is a Slavic-folklore-inspired novel about Mara, the granddaughter of Stribog – God of Winter Winds – setting out on an epic journey with her bear-shifting best friend, to bring her father back from the dead. I like to centre my writing around family and friendship love stories, rather than romantic love stories. In this novel, I wanted to explore the need to protect, which children often feel for their parents or guardians.

Mara is a very lonely child. She knows she doesn't quite match everyone's expectations, on both sides of her family: god and human. So the relationship with her father, the one person who offers her the affection and reassurance she craves, was immensely important to the core of her identity.

Mara is untrusting and insecure, yet resourceful and endlessly stubborn. I wanted to explore the emotions a child like her might go through at the loss of the one person who gave her stability. Because of Mara's heritage, the normal grieving process didn't feel like the only option. Mara wouldn't fear the gods – after all, she grew up among them. She

wouldn't care for what's considered proper for the humans – she wasn't fully one. She finds herself a loophole to try and do the unimaginable and defy death itself.

In the process of trying to bring her father back from the dead, Mara has to explore the duality of her nature, including all the aspects of it she's been running from: she is half human-half god, but others only see one part of her. There is a struggle to prove herself, to prove that she can belong in both worlds. Her father is her link to humanity, but she believes that the nascent god nature inside her might be the key to saving him.

Torniv, Mara's friend, also struggles with his dual identity, and he sees something in Mara, someone who can help him belong.

Mara and Torniv come up against deadly monsters and difficult challenges in this book. Did you plan the entire story out, or did the characters lead the way?

I never plan my stories in advance, as I like to get to know the characters first, and feel for what's natural to them before I make things happen. In terms of their adventures, my focus is on Mara and Torniv's friendship – how those two lonely children find their way to trust each other. The creatures and the

“ I like to centre my writing around family and friendship love stories, rather than romantic love stories. ”

challenges they meet along the way expose their weaknesses, they feel the cracks in their armour. As they learn to understand each other more, Torniv and Mara begin to rely on their friendship. This learning to empathise and learning to trust is always gradual, and I wanted it to feel as organic as possible.

The Wind Child is said to have been shaped by your childhood and the landscape you grew up in. How does it feel to put these things on the page for readers to discover for themselves?

Writing Slavic-folklore-inspired fiction is, in a sense, a way for me to reach back towards my early childhood, to the stories I grew up with. Slavic mythology is still not as well-known as its Western counterparts, not even in the Slavic countries, and while I studied Greek and Norse mythologies at school and university, Slavic folklore remained confined to the space of fairy tales, of children's bedtime stories. Returning to it, and studying it critically for the first time, has been a real joy. It has such a sense of wonder to it, and it fits in so well with the landscapes I remember. It makes me so happy to be able to share this small part of my heritage with my own children and with all the readers who might not have come across Slavic stories before.

Have you always wanted to be a writer?

For a long time it was my ambition to be a writer-illustrator, but while art will always be a part of my life, writing definitely comes easier to me. I dared not presume as to what success or lack thereof I might experience. But writing was just something I have always done, because not doing it would be unthinkable.

This is your first children's novel. How does it feel to write for both children and adults?

I want to write all kinds of books, for everyone to enjoy! I want to do novels, and comics, and illustrated novels, and picture books! It's all storytelling, and my appetite for that is boundless!

“Writing was just something I have always done, because not doing it would be unthinkable.”

Do you have any favourite characters from children's literature?

Ronya, from *Ronya, the Robber's Daughter* by Astrid Lindgren. I read that novel so many times as a child! Ronya is adventurous, and brave, and mischievous, but also fiercely loyal and loving. In a way, she encapsulated how I saw myself, and how I wanted to be. I envied her for the freedom and opportunities for reckless adventure, I suppose.

What's next for your writing?

I have an adult novel project I'm working on right now, but I also have a children's novel all finished, which I can't talk about just yet! I hope to be able to show people more of Mara and Torniv for sure! 🐾



Try Gabriela's
writing prompt :

You find yourself in your favourite place. A creature appears in front of you, a creature that belongs to that place, that embodies the soul of it.

Tell me about it. What does it look like and what does it want?

We'd love to read what you come up with.

Send your writing to:

paperboundmagazine@outlook.com

Gabriela Houston

Gabriela Houston is a Polish writer based in London, UK. She writes Slavic-folklore-inspired fantasy. Her adult fantasy debut, *The Second Bell*, came out in March 2021 from Angry Robot Books, and her children's fiction debut, *The Wind Child*, from UCLan Publishing, is out now.

Follow Gabriela on social media

Twitter: [@gabrielahouston](https://twitter.com/gabrielahouston)
Instagram: [@gabrielahouston](https://www.instagram.com/gabrielahouston)
www.gabrielahouston.com



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IF YOU'RE AN ARTIST OR ILLUSTRATOR AND WOULD LIKE TO SEE YOUR WORK IN A FUTURE ISSUE, YOU CAN FIND OUT MORE HERE: WWW.PAPERBOUNDMAG.COM

JAY KENNEDY

Jay is a New Zealand born digital illustrator that enjoys creating cartoony, stylised drawings that often have a central character focus. Jay has had the opportunity to provide artwork towards children's books, comic anthologies, corporate events as well as government initiatives. Jay's art takes inspiration from the real people around him while incorporating elements of cartoon to make the design more fun and fantasy driven. Most of Jay's art is created digitally on an iPad, which allows him greater freedom in adjusting the composition and the colours used in each piece.

Jay created the brilliant illustration on the front cover of this action/adventure issue!



Jayne Leadbetter

Jayne loves painting animals, flowers and nature, but also loves technology. She's currently working on a children's picture book and also writing a Young Adult love story based in the Lake District in Cumbria, with an environmental mystery at its heart and an element of grounded sci-fi. Jayne illustrated one of our writing prompts this issue.

You can see more of Jayne's art on Instagram: [@jayneleadbetter](https://www.instagram.com/jayneleadbetter)





SARA NETHERWAY

Sara is based on the Isle of Wight off the coast of Southern England where she lives with her husband and two children. She studied Fine Art and, after graduating, worked in-house as a graphic designer and then homeware designer for high street retailers. Whilst creating character illustrations for homeware she found her love of storytelling and worked on developing a freelance portfolio. Since then she's worked on projects including greetings cards, editorial and book illustration. Prints of her work are also now available in her Etsy shop. Sara illustrated *The White Cliffs of Dover* in this issue.



See more of Sara's work at www.saranetherway.co.uk

Instagram @sara_netherway_illustration

Twitter @sara_netherway



ALEXANDRA FOWLER

Alex is an Illustrator and author living in Cornwall with her husband and 3 children. Having previously dabbled with creating and selling art over the years, she took the plunge to become a freelance illustrator in 2019. Since this time she has illustrated a number of children's books aimed at 2 to 6 years olds and is the author of the middle grade *Cornish Legends* series of adventure stories, under the pen name Lilac Rosenwyn. Alex loves to illustrate in watercolour as well as digitally, for which she uses photoshop. All her work can be found at

www.cornishbooks.com

Alexandra illustrated our contents page this issue!



RACH REITZ

Rach is a writer/illustrator living in Yorkshire. She has a BA in Design for Film and Television but most recently moved into creating children's books. Some of her favourite things to both write and draw are inspired by the woods, animals, friendship, myths and fairy tales.

You'll find Rach's illustration on our Quizzes page this issue!



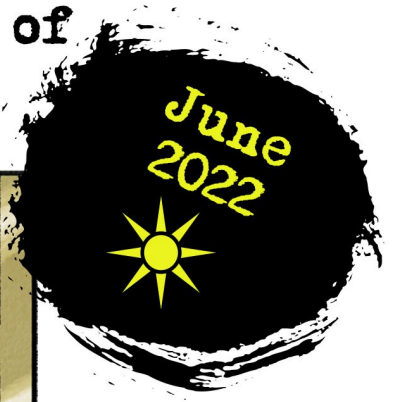
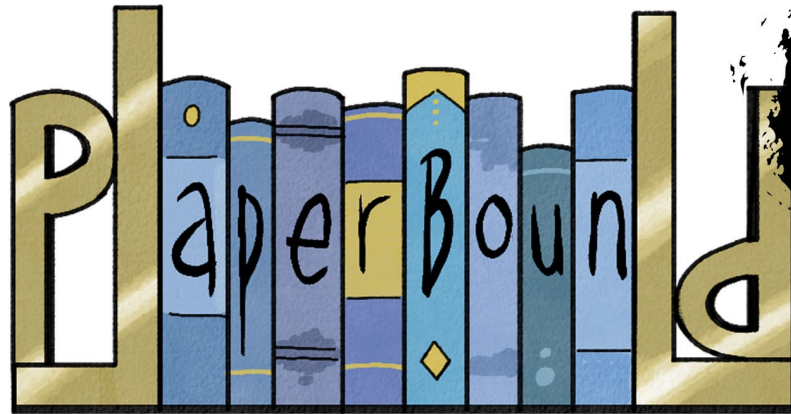
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Answers: 1. Not your Sidekick 2. Once We Were Witches 3. On a Sunbeam 4. Way of the Argosy 5. Crossword: Across 2) Home 4) The Wind Child 6) Blood to Poison 7) BUG Down 1) Lee Newbery 3) Time Tunnelers 5) Anthony Burt



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for the young, and the young at heart

New Writing

New Art

Author Interviews

Writing Tips

Book Recommendations

and more...

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